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ATS '5th Anniversary



York, Pennsylvania
1995

Plicatas in Progression

SAN FRANCISCO ▶
(Mohr '27)
Dykes Medal 1927



▲ STEPPING OUT
(Schreiner '64)
Dykes Medal 1968



◀ JESSE'S SONG
(B. Williamson '83)
Dykes Medal 1990

**BULLETIN
OF THE
AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY**

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Diamond Anniversary Issue

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American Iris Society

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

by Claire B. Barr

The seventy-fifth birthday is here, the diamond anniversary of the American Iris Society, a time to reminisce. The society can do so with pride. One wonders whether, on that January day in 1920 when the first organizational meeting was held at the New York Botanical Garden, the founders of our society had any thoughts of what their efforts might bring about in fifty, seventy-five, or even one hundred years. This year members will gather for the national convention in Pennsylvania, the state in which the Society was incorporated many years ago and in an area prominent in the early history of this country. It is an appropriate location for such an important anniversary.

An occasion to be remembered in the immediate past is the Awards Banquet at the Portland, Oregon convention last spring. Present at that dinner meeting were all the living past presidents of the American Iris Society, who posed for a photograph (see page 62 & 63) at the end of the Awards ceremony. They are: Marion R. Walker (1956-59), Harold L. Stahly (1981-83), Ronald Mullin (1984-86), James Rasmussen (1987-89), and Kenneth M. Waite (1990-92). Included in the photograph are the wives of the five past presidents; Mrs Leon Wolford, whose late husband served as president from 1978-80; the current president, Claire Bryant Barr (1993-95). Also in the photo, and participating in the awards ceremony, is the late Kay Nelson-Keppel, who served as Assistant Editor of the Bulletin

when her father, J. Arthur Nelson, was Editor, and who served for many years as Registrar for the AIS and Advertising Editor for the Bulletin; Professor Sergio Orsi, President of the Societa Italiana Dell'Iris;

and B. C. Baughen, Editor of the British Iris Society Year Book.

This photograph is more than just an interesting group picture. It is representative of the rich past of The American Iris Society, of the dedication of the many members who have gone before us as well as those of us who are still working together; it also represents cooperation with and regard for other iris societies around the world.

On the occasion of this anniversary, it is fitting that we should remember the accomplishments of the past and make plans for the years ahead. In the meantime, let us appreciate and enjoy our irises today.

FROM THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

by Jean Witt

The AIS Scholarship Committee began in 1984, with Catherine L Gates as Chairman. In 1985 a yearly \$2,000 scholarship for graduate study in the plant sciences was established by the AIS Board.

Our announcement goes to 140 colleges and universities around the country, and is open to all US citizens, except for AIS directors, employees, scholarship committee and members of their immediate families.

The first scholarship was awarded in 1986. A total of ten have now been awarded, for a variety of botanical and horticultural research projects, including some on irises. Our award is in addition to those made by the Scientific Committee specifically for iris research. Lillian Gristwood was chairman from 1987-89, followed by Catherine Gates again. Jean Witt is the current chairman.

We receive somewhere between sixteen and twenty-five applications each year from students working toward Masters and PhD degrees. Their research proposals have been of excellent

quality, making choices difficult. Last year, thanks to extra funds from memorials, we were able to award two scholarships, one for research in Iris and another for research in Sisyrrinchium. At the moment research proposals for Iris research exceed our funding ability.

THE AIS YOUTH PROGRAM

by Jean E. Morris

The AIS youth program was voted into being at the Fall Board Meeting in Denver, November 1966, upon the recommendation of Mrs. Elizabeth H. Rowe of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She had chaired a committee to study the feasibility of such a program for iris lovers under the age of nineteen. This added an additional AIS Standing Committee, and Mrs. Rowe was duly appointed Chairman by Hubert A. Fischer, AIS President. She served in the position for two years, submitting pictures of youth activities for publication in *AIS Bulletins*.

In January of 1969, young Larry Harder of Ponca Nebraska, took over the Youth Committee Chairmanship and served until 1971. Larry began writing informative youth articles in the *AIS Bulletins*, and youth news was provided in every *Bulletin* during his chairmanship. He also devised a bold nine-point youth plan. In part, it set AIS youth dues at \$1.00 without *AIS Bulletins* or \$2.00 with *AIS Bulletins*, called for a Youth Horticulture Division in all AIS shows and established a policy allowing 4-6 pages in *AIS Bulletins* for reporting youth news. In 1970, youth dues were amended to \$1.50/\$2.50. During Larry's chairmanship, Mrs. Iris Smith directed the "Teens & Twenties" Robin Program in answer to a grass-roots youth movement for better communication. Original members included Keith Keppel, Glenn Corlew, Joe Ghio and Phil Edinger. "Teens & Twenties" flew very well for quite some time. Younger youths wanted in the Robin Program, so Mrs. Smith started "Twixt & Tweens" for ages thirteen and under. This "fledgling" group did not fly as well.

In 1971, Mrs. Ann Branch Dasch of Timonium, Maryland, took over as AIS Youth Chairman and continued the practice of seeing that youth news was published in *AIS Bulletins*, named the youth column "Youth Views," and provided the art work to go with the name. She also delegated the editing duties of "Youth Views" to Thomas Ford, and beginning in 1975, to Rosalie Beasley. During Ann's chairmanship, all six pages of the 4-6 limit were usually filled up, and some good quality articles were submitted by youths. AIS Conventions always included special youth meetings and parties where Ann interviewed youths with the skill of a news reporter. The resulting articles made good reading.

Ann also put together "Young Ideas," a booklet of youth policy, projects and programs and made it available to Youth Chairmen and Advisors in the regions. A small booklet, "Growing and Hybridizing Bearded Irises," was available to the youths, themselves. Ann also designed a good youth membership application form which is still in use today. In November, 1971, at the recommendation of the Youth Committee, the AIS Board initiated the AIS Youth Achievement Award Contest. It is interesting to note that Dr. Clarke Cosgrove, ever a champion of youth, made the motion that put this award into being. In 1979, after Clarke's death, his sister, LaVerne Conrad, set up a memorial fund for Clarke and the Youth Achievement Award was officially named the Clarke Cosgrove Memorial Award for Youth Achievement. The rules and guidelines for the contest have remained the same since its initiation. In 1973 the first trophy winner was 18 year old Perry Dyer of Blanchard, Oklahoma. As an added bonus, the other youths attending the Roanoke Convention threw a fully clothed Perry Dyer into the swimming pool.

In 1978, Ms. Jayne Ritchie of Reston, Virginia, took over as AIS Youth Chairman, and in her two years she kept "Youth Views" filled with interesting news. Jayne had been a tireless worker for youth at the affiliate level and was an apt choice for Chairman. At the 1980 Fall Board Meeting in Dallas, the AIS authorized Youth Silver and Bronze Show Medals using the same design as the adult medals, but in a slightly smaller size.

In 1981, Maryann Anning of Los Altos Hills, California, became AIS Youth Chairman. Youth dues became \$2.00/\$3.25. The AIS Board approved the finances for the publication of a twice a year

youth newsletter. A “naming contest” was held and was won by Suzanne Morris of St. Louis with her idea, “The Iris Fan.” Another youth, Paul Matalucci of Region 23 created the cover design, and the first issue went out to AIS youth members in October, 1981. Later editions were edited by youth member, Tom Little of Region 23. Maryann, assisted by Betty Wood and Tom Little, created “The AIS Youth Member Handbook,” an excellent 20 page booklet full of information on classification, culture, hybridizing and showing irises. The booklet includes clear illustrations and, today, remains the key item in the youth membership packet. Maryann also revised “Young Ideas”, designed a useful youth questionnaire form, met many youth members personally, and hosted youth events at AIS Conventions. During her enthusiastic three year chairmanship, AIS youth membership rose to an all time high of 250 members. At the 1981 Spring AIS Board Meeting in St. Louis, it was resolved that there be no minimum age for AIS judges, opening up that opportunity for youth members. Requirements for appointment were to be the same for adults and youths.

In 1984, Catherine Long Gates of Boulder, Colorado, was appointed Youth Chairman and served until 1991. Cathy used her organizational talents to create an orderly youth committee filing system.

She held an imaginative “Iris of the Future” essay contest in 1987. In 1989, the AIS Foundation announced the initiation of the “Ackerman Youth Essay Contest,” made possible by a donation from Mrs. Robert Thrun of Lansing, Michigan, as a memorial to her parents, Jay and Marian Ackerman. Sue Copeland of Mattawan, Michigan, was the first winner of the \$100 prize. The Foundation names a new topic for the contest, each year.

Cathy continued to write informative articles for “Youth Views,” designed a “Grow With AIS Youth” button, hosted Youth Receptions at AIS Conventions and worked out the details for the AIS Pen Pals Program to replace the now grounded Youth Robins. Also a special category for youth was established in the AIS Membership Contest. AIS youth dues were revised to \$3.00/\$4.50.

In 1992, Jean Morris of Ballwin, Missouri, was appointed Chairman of the AIS Youth Committee. She reestablished publication of *The Iris Fan* and launched the AIS Pen Pals Program. She also conducted an AIS Coloring Contest through *The Iris Fan*.

The overall winner was ten-year-old Tina Krampe of Florissant, Missouri. Jean has also rewarded youth accomplishment and participation by shipping iris rhizomes to as many youth members as possible.

At the 1994 AIS Fall Board Meeting in Albuquerque, the AIS Board approved one free set of Youth Medals per year for each affiliate.

Future Youth Committee goals include convincing RVPs to appoint a Regional Youth Chairman in all 24 regions and affiliate Presidents to appoint a Youth Advisor for every local iris club. Where there are willing people, it is easy to involve young people in irises. Many will become future adult AIS members. At the very least, they will go through life knowing about and appreciating the iris.

It is not our intent, here, to single out the many outstanding AIS youths of the past, but it is inspiring to note two. At the age of sixteen, Phil Williams of Region 7, had already helped organize the Twin States Iris Society and was its President, and he also belonged to the Middle Tennessee Iris Society and edited its Newsletter. Perry Dyer of Region 22, at seventeen, wrote a four page article of varietal comments for the AIS Bulletin, entitled, "Radical Views," which reads just like his, now famous, "Contemporary Views," that many look forward to reading each year. Perry, at age eighteen, grew over 500 named varieties of irises and entered 100 iris stalks in the Horticulture Divisions of four shows, winning 97 ribbons. There are many other AIS leaders who started out in the youth ranks.

The American Iris Society is 75 years old this year. The AIS Youth Committee, begun in 1966, is 29 — and holding.

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

Perry Dyer	1974	Jimmy Ziehl	1985
Margaret Perry	1975	Michael Hemmer	1986
Alford & Steven Vincent	1976	Patrick Hemmer	1987
Rik Rasmussen	1977	Beth Bowman	1988
Chris Kennedy	1978	Lou Anne Watson	1989
Tom Little	1979	Jerry Simmons	1990
William J. Ziehl	1980	Sue Copeland	1991
David Wright	1981	Michael McCarthy	1992
David Spence	1982	Kurt Latimer	1993
Jimmy Copeland	1983	Andrew Wheeler	1994
Mark Hewitt	1984	Danika King	1995

HISTORY OF THE LAST TWENTY FIVE YEARS

Larry Harder

1970: The 50th Anniversary of the founding of The American Iris Society. The January 1970 bulletin was issued in two parts. The Anniversary Bulletin had articles and reminiscences by the living presidents of the Society, John C. Wister, Jesse E. Wills, Guy Rogers, Marion R. Walker and Hubert A. Fisher. Robert Schreiner updated us on iris hybridizing. Helen McCaughey, AIS Historian, contributed biographical sketches of officers and major award winners, lists of the past presidents, and locations of Annual Meetings. Peggy Burke Grey wrote about progress of irises other than tall bearded.

Part Two was the regular January issue, reporting on new officers and incoming RVPs. Dues were raised from \$5.00 to \$7.50 per year. A special commemorative silver medal was issued in honor the 50th Anniversary. A new color classification system to clarify new color patterns was approved by the Board of Directors. This system was to be used in the Registration and Introduction booklet.

Dr Raymond Allen reported for the special committee formed to develop plans for a foundation for the Society.

350 attended the 50th Anniversary convention in New York, including all the living past presidents.

Membership in AIS dropped from 6904 to 6092.

Deaths during 1970 were reported as follows: **Clarence A. Swarengen**, President of the Japanese Iris Society from 1963-66; **Claude O'Brien**, Region 4, a member of the Board of Directors; **Eugene Buckles**, noted hybridizer of Dykes Medal winner, Border Bearded BROWN LASSO; **Clara B. Rees** of SNOW FLURRY fame, winner of the Hybridizer's Medal in 1967.

1971: The Board recommended the formation of The American Iris Society Foundation. Original board members were L. F. Randolph, J. Arthur Nelson, Jay C. Ackerman, William T. Bledsoe, Earl T. Browder, Jesse E. Wills, Hugo Wall, Clifford W. Benson, Guy Rogers.

Membership in AIS dropped from 6092 to 5605 in 1971.

Deaths reported in 1971 were as follows: **Crescent Deru** of Utah, hybridizer of BB CHOCOLETO, helped author chapters in the Judges Handbook dealing with median irises; **W. Arlie Payne**

(for whom the Payne Award for Japanese Irises is named) died at the age of 90. He lived and raised irises in Terre Haute, IN. His interest in Japanese irises began in 1932, and over the years he registered 170 of them.

1972: A number of by-laws changes were made. Members interested in a specific group of irises were permitted to organize separate societies within the AIS. Local organizations following AIS guidelines could become Affiliates of AIS. Youth memberships were created, as well as authority to the Board of Directors to grant honorary memberships. It was voted to create an Historical Committee, with the AIS officer designated Historian as chairman.

At the fall board meeting in Omaha, November, 1972, AIS established the annual "Youth Achievement Award"; also the "Board of Directors Award" which is given to honor any iris which has not won a Dykes Medal, but which shows clearly in its progeny that it is among the greats of irisdom.

Membership dropped from 5605 to 5410.

In 1972 deaths of two noteworthy irisarians were reported: **Rholin Cooley**, owner of Cooley's Gardens in Silverton, OR. He began his gardens in 1927 and introduced iris from Kleinsorge, Bonnewitz, Wareham, Ayres, Kirkland, the Sass brothers, Dave Hall, Jim Gibson, Larry Gaulter; and **Connie Schreiner Kendall**, who with her two brothers, Robert and Gus, ran the Schreiner Iris Gardens. Schreiners began their garden in Minnesota in 1925, moving to Salem, OR after World War II. Also, **Mrs. W. G. DuMont** of Des Moines, IA died at the age of 94. She was one of the few remaining charter members of AIS.

1973: In 1973 the Regional Test Gardens were turned back to the Regions. New rules were established for a "National Test Garden" (convention garden) to be in place at each national meeting. A Membership Trophy was initiated, the first winner being Mrs R. P. Van Valkenburg of Huntsville, AL. AIS membership dropped from 5410 to 5329.

Deaths occurring in 1973 included: **Mrs. Thomas Nesmith**, noted plantswoman and a Charter Member of the AIS; **Donald G. Waters** who served as an AIS Director from 1951-57 and 1961-62. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal in 1962. MUSIC MAKER was one of his outstanding iris introductions; **J. Arthur Nelson** who was editor of the Bulletin from 1964 to the time of his death. He served the Society in many capacities; as a director from

1958-1970, Exhibitions Committee chairman, Registrar for the Society (1965-73) and Chairman of the Awards Committee (1966), as well as working endlessly in the area of color classification of irises.

1974: At the fall board meeting in 1974 it was reported membership was down from 5329 to 5271. Award of Merit winners in the median classes became eligible for the Dykes Medal.

The death of **Elizabeth Rowe Seibert**, first Youth Chairman of AIS, occurred in 1974.

1975: In 1975, for the first time, RVPs and Section presidents were invited to attend and observe the Board of Directors meetings. The Board terminated the National Test Garden program, effective the close of the 1977 season. Bee Warburton was awarded the Foster Memorial Plaque by the British Iris Society. AIS membership dropped slightly from 5271 to 5246.

Catherine Smith died in 1975. She and her husband were noted irisarians and hybridizers of PINK RUFFLES, IB, AMOS SHERARD and REPARTEE, to name a few.

1976: Because of rising costs, the Board of Directors at the fall board meeting in 1976 finally had to make a decision either to cut the Bulletin or cut the central office in St. Louis. The position of Executive Secretary was created by the AIS Board in 1956. A vote was taken and the position of Executive Secretary was eliminated.

The following deaths were reported in 1976; **Hugo Wall**, Wichita, KS, past president of The American Iris Society; **Roy Brizendine**, creator of the award winning TB MILLIONAIRE, but primarily interested in aril and arilbreds. His SYRIAN MOON received the C.G. White Award. He received the Hybridizer's Medal in 1970.

1977: In 1977 the new book *The World of Irises*, edited by Bee Warburton, became available through the AIS.

At the National Convention in Memphis, TN, Helen Boehm presented to the AIS a porcelain iris as a rotating trophy to be presented to each incoming American Iris Society president. Following this presentation, David Schreiner unveiled a poster sized photograph of a new Schreiner introduction, HELEN BOEHM, named in her honor.

Section approval was granted to the Species Iris Group of North America (SIGNA). AIS membership was 4895. The awards system was changed to require that an iris must wait until the second year after introduction before becoming eligible for an HM award.

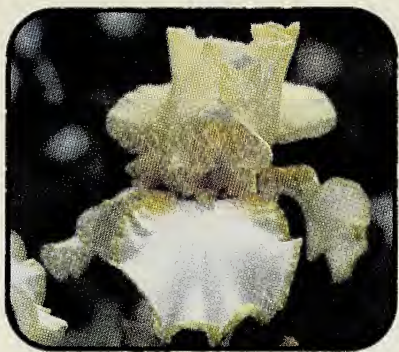
A number of deaths were reported in 1977, as follows: **Hazel E. Schmelzer**. Her CAPTAIN GALLANT won the first Cook-Lapham Bowl for red irises; **Maybelle Wright**, noted hybridizer of median irises and author of the section on standard dwarf bearded irises in THE WORLD OF IRISES; **Jesse Wills**, past president of the AIS. His first introduction, CHIVALRY, won the Dykes Medal in 1947; **Barbara Walther**, curator of the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens in Montclair, NJ. Her home was adjacent to the gardens and is now the Garden Center for Presby; **Ira E. Wood**, past Board member. The Morgan-Wood Medal for siberian irises was dually named for F. Cleveland Morgan and Ira Wood; **Georgia Hinkle**, noted hybridizer. She won six Awards of Merit and the Hybridizer's Medal in 1966; **Earl Roberts**, one of the founders of the Median Iris Society. He won many AIS awards for his median irises and the Hybridizer's Medal in 1975.

1978: The first color centerfold appeared in the January, 1978 issue of the Bulletin. The Dwarf Iris Society became a Section of AIS, as did the Louisiana Iris Society of America.

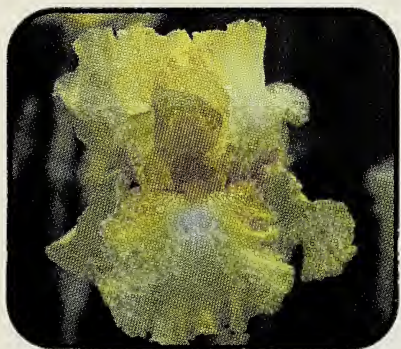
At the International Iris Congress in Orleans, France in May, 1978, a Sevres vase was presented to the American Iris Society in tribute to the importance and value of contributions coming from the United States.

The following deaths were reported in 1978: **William T. Bledsoe**, past president of AIS and instrumental in creating parameters for judges' training schools. In 1963 he was Chairman of Exhibitions, and chairman of a committee to revise the "Handbook for Judges and Exhibitions"; **Peggy Burke Grey**, national Robin Editor and responsible for the Flight Lines section in the Bulletin. She was an officer of the Median Iris Society, Spuria Iris Society, Reblooming Iris Society and Society for Siberian Irises; **J. Clarke Cosgrove**, past president of AIS. He was elected to the Board of Directors in 1967, and served as president of the Spuria Iris Society, Exhibitions Chairman, RVP Counsellor and Awards Chairman. He was also a strong supporter of the Youth Program; **Wiloh Wilkes**, arilbred hybridizer and one of the founders of the Aril Society, International. Her IMARET won the C.G. White Award; **Gerta M. Beach**, was interested in the preservation of historical irises, and with Harriet Seggessmann began the Historical Chronicles; **Eva E. Faught**, hybridizer of such tall bearded irises as CAHOKIA and PIERRE MENARD; **William B. MacMillan**, hybridizer, and one

Dykes Medal Winners



DEBBY RAIDON
(Kuntz '64) DM'71



NEW MOON
(N. Sexton '68) DM'73



SKYWATCH
(C. Benson '64) DM'70



SHIPSHAPE
(S. Babson '69) DM'74



BABBLING BROOK
(Keppel '65) DM'72

Dykes Medal Winners



MARY FRANCES
(L. Gaulter '73) DM'79



PINK TAFFETA
(Rudolph '68) DM'75



DREAM LOVER
(E. Tams '71) DM'77



KILT LILT
(J. Gibson '70) DM'76



BRIDE'S HALO
(H. Mohr '73) DM'78

of the organizers of the Society for Louisiana Irises. His **BLACK WIDOW** won the Debaillon Award in 1968; **Tell Muhlestein**, noted Utah hybridizer, helped establish the Utah Iris Society and was its first president in 1945. He was known for his accomplishments in pink tall beardeds, such as **JUNE MEREDITH**, and won the Hybridizers Medal in 1956.

1979: At the spring Board meeting, 1979, the state of Alaska was assigned to Region 13; Hawaii to Region 14. The Walther Cup was to be awarded in 1979, and subsequent years, to the iris receiving the highest number of votes in the HM award sections of the official ballot, with all classes to be eligible.

In 1979 Region 15 endowed a youth trophy in memory of Dr. Clarke Cosgrove. The trophy is known as the "Clarke Cosgrove Memorial Award for Youth Achievement".

1980: By the fall Board meeting in 1980, AIS membership had increased to 6507. AIS officially recognized the Ira Wood Medal, given to recipients of the Morgan Award. The Aril Society International was placed in the status "Cooperating Society". New medals were designed for the Youth sections in shows, and were made available for purchase.

Deaths reported for 1980 included the following: **Walter Welch**, Millbury, IN, a noted hybridizer of dwarf irises and organizer of the Dwarf Iris Society. He was awarded the Hybridizer's Medal in 1957 and the Foster Memorial Plaque in 1964. A number of his irises won the Caparne Award; **L. F. Randolph**, former president of AIS; **Dr. Peter Wierckmeister**, Germany, the world's first authority in the genetics of Iris pigments, and genetics and breeding of aril-breds. Of importance were his analysis of amphidiploidy and his concept of "fertile families" and sterilities.

1981: In 1981 single annual dues were raised to \$9.50. At the spring Board meeting a Policy committee was formed. Its purpose was to have all AIS policy decisions gathered in one record, regularly updated and distributed to all Board members.

English Boxes as a section of horticultural division on show schedules was approved.

With the growth of the Society and proliferating responsibilities of the business office, it was decided to appoint a Recording Secretary.

The Caparne Award was elevated to medal status, said medal to be called the Caparne-Welch Medal, effective in 1984. In 1985 the qualifying awards for Dykes Medal eligibility for those classes

having special medals with be the Special Medal winner (rather than the Award of Merit winner, as in the past).

At the fall Board meeting, membership was report at 6871. The new trend in shows was the unclassified or varietal show in which each variety is judged on its own merits. A new Youth Handbook was published .

Deaths reported for 1981 were as follows: **Orville W. Fay**, noted hybridizer of irises and daylilies. Three of his irises, MARY RANDALL, TRULY YOURS and RIPPLING WATERS won the Dykes Medal; **Guy Rogers**, Wichita Falls, TX. He was the first RVP for Region 17, a Director from 1948-62, and sixth president of AIS, 1949-52; **Lucy Delany**, founder of the New Zealand Iris Society's Dwarf Iris group; **Arnold Schliefert**, Nebraska, noted especially for his Award of Merit winner ANGEL CHOIR; **Glenn F. Hanson**, Minneapolis, MN, AIS director from 1970-76; **Eugene Hunt**, Falles, OK, noted aril and arilbred hybridizer of such varieties as ESTHER THE QUEEN; **W. B. Schortman**, California, worked primarily with tall bearded irises and was awarded the Hybridizer's Medal in 1961; **C. Robert Minnick**, Kansas City, MO, who served as Chairman of the National Test Garden Committee from 1970-73; **Barbara Serdynski**, California, an active worker for the Society with particular emphasis on the Round Robin program.

1982: In 1982 two new Ais publications became available: Maryann Lanning's *Basic Iris Culture* and *Irises for Everyone*, edited and authored by Olive Rice and George Waters.

The following deaths were reported: **Elizabeth Stuart Jones**, Membership Secretary for the Society after the St. Louis office was closed; **Frank E. Chowning**, noted hybridizer of Louisiana irises, such as DIXIE DEB, ANN CHOWNING, BRYCE LEIGH; **Hubert A. Fischer**, past president of AIS 1963-66. He was instrumental in establishing the AIS Foundation and worked in the areas of AIS affiliation for local societies establishing the different Sections of AIS; **David W. Lyon**, California, hybridizer of such varieties as ALI BABA, EMPRESS EUGENIE, GOLD CARGO, etc.; **Ethel K. Ricker**, Iowa, who served as National Exhibition Chairman (1938-50). During World War II no national conventions were held, so shows were the mainstay of the Society; **Jake Scharff**, Tennessee, served as a Director (1970-73). He did some hybridizing and helped create the Ketchum Memorial Iris Garden in Memphis; **Lerton Hooker**, Illinois & California, who introduced such favorites as

ACORN, BLACK CHARM, CONGO MAGIC and LITTLE BOWKNOT; **Helen McCaughey**, who was the first and only AIS Historian. She served on the AIS Board of Directors and the Board of the AIS Foundation; **Henry E. Sass**, son of Jacob Sass, who had worked with his father and Uncle Hans in the creation of a number of award winning irises. He was awarded the AIS Hybridizers Medal in 1958; **Bernard (Gus) Schreiner**, Oregon, co-owner of Schreiner's Gardens with his brother Robert and sister Connie (deceased). His area of expertise was in hybridizing. From this work has come the continual stream of award winning irises over the years, beginning with their first Dykes Medal winner in 1958 for BLUE SAPPHIRE; **Ada Buxton**, former Director of AIS 1963-68. She served as Awards Chairman and Chairman of the Garden Judges Committee.

1983: In 1983 the Great Gold Medal of Munich was awarded to the American Iris Society. Eight gold, nineteen silver and thirty-three bronze medals were awarded to individual hybridizers.

Awards were changed for Louisiana irises, and the DeBaillon Award became the DeBaillon Medal.

Deaths noted in 1983 were as follows: **Arthur H. Hazzard**, noted Japanese iris hybridizer. Three of his irises won the Payne Award, NUMAZU, PRAIRIE LOVESONG and PRAIRIE VELVET; **John C. Wister**, first president of the AIS 1920-34. He was the author of "The Iris" (the first iris book authorized by AIS). He was awarded the Foster Memorial Award by the British Iris Society, the Gold Medal and many other national awards; **Edwin Rundlett**, one of the founders of the Reblooming Iris Society; **Jay Ackerman**, former treasurer and member of the Board of Directors. He was awarded the AIS Gold Medal in 1976; **Forrest McCord**, noted Siberian iris hybridizer. He won the Morgan Award in 1974 for GRAND JUNCTION and 1975 for HALCYON SEAS.

1984: At the spring board meeting in 1984 the Morgan Award for Siberian irises became the Morgan-Wood Medal. The Siberian section was permitted three Awards of Merit annually. The Board authorized the purchase of a new computer for use by the Registrar. A convention Handbook was being assembled.

The Board, at the November, 1984 meeting, approved the use of names of registered but non-introduced varieties in the recording of pedigrees in the registration of irises.

Deaths reported for 1984 include the following: **Thornton**

Abell, California, first president of the Aril Society and past president of the Society for Japanese Irises. His SAFFRON JEWEL won the 1971 Mohr Award, and FUJI won the Payne Award in 1981. In addition, he worked with TBs, BBs and PCIs; **Earl T. Browder**, West Virginia, AIS Board member 1969-75; **Wilma Greenlee**, Indiana, median iris hybridizer. She won the Sass Award for BLUE ASTERISK in 1962 and CLOUD FLUFF in 1963 and the Caparne Award in 1967 for the first plicata in the MDB class, KNICK-KNACK; **Samuel Stillman Berry**, noted hybridizer in the 1920s and '30s.

1985: In 1985 the 5th Edition of the "Handbook for Judges and Show Officials" became available. It was voted to adopt an AIS award of a \$2,000. scholarship for graduate study in the field of plant sciences each year. A committee was formed to administer this Scholarship program.

Deaths reported in 1985 include: **Molly Price**, SDB hybridizer, who was Medianite Editor 1960-61 and the author of *The Iris Book* published in 1966; **Carl A. Quadros**, California, longtime commercial iris grower and hybridizer of such well known irises as MADEIRA BELLE; **Eva Smith**, Idaho, hybridizer and winner of the Caparne Award in 1970 for her BUMBLE WINGS; Neva Sexton, noted hybridizer, who won the Dykes Medal for her PACIFIC PANORAMA and NEW MOON; **Carl O. Schirmer**, past RVP for Region 18, served on the AIS Board of Directors and as treasurer for AIS.

1986: In 1986 the Board authorized purchase of a new computer for use by the Membership Secretary. The new RVP Handbook was printed and sent to all RVPs. The first meeting of HIPS (Historical Iris Preservation Society) was held at the spring convention in San Jose. AIS membership was recorded as 7,423.

In 1986 the following deaths were reported: **William McGarvey**, New York, noted Siberian iris hybridizer. He won the Morgan Award for his introductions DEWFUL, SUPER EGO and EGO; **Hazel Bartholomew**, noted iris photographer; **Donald R. Denney**, California, co-owner of Cottage Gardens. Noted for his work with red TBs such as SPECTACULAR BID which won an Award of Merit, he also worked with medians, and won the Knowlton Medal in 1983 for his BB AM I BLUE; **Les Peterson**, long-time hybridizer of arilbreds and bearded irises. He won the C.G. White Award in 1972 for SONICE, and in 1977 for BANGLADESH; **David B. Sindt**, Illinois, past RVP for Region 9 and noted hybridizer of

small bearded irises. He won the Caparne Award for SUN SPARKLE in 1972 and NUGGETS in 1980, and the Caparne-Welch Medal for ZIPPER in 1986; **Dorothy S. Palmer**, known for her work with tall bearded, primarily. She won Awards of Merit for her LILTING MELODY, BUTTERED POPCORN and STARING ROLE, was awarded the Hybridizers Award in 1984; **Elsie Zuercher**, past RVP for Region 6, editor of the Dwarf Iris Society's Portfolio.

1987: In 1987 the AIS membership was reported at 7,750. The Spuria Iris Society requested and received approval to have the Nies Award become the Nies Medal, effective in 1989.

Deaths for 1987 were reported as follows: **Ila Crawford**, Oklahoma, president of the Spuria Iris Society in 1969. She also founded the Apogon Iris Unit in Oklahoma City; **Mary Williamson**, Indiana, daughter of E.B. Williamson for whom, with Alice White, the Williamson-White Award for MTBs is named. Mary was awarded the Dykes Medal in 1940 for WABASH and the Williamson-White award for PEWEE, **Bernice R. Roe**, California, hybridizer of tall bearded irises and spurias and co-founder of the Clara B. Rees Iris Society (CA).

1988: In 1988 the Louisiana Iris Society published its book "The Louisiana Iris, edited by Marie Caillet and Joseph Mertzweiller. An interesting comment in an article in the July, 1988 Bulletin noted that the painting of "Irises" by Vincent van Gogh had sold for the record price of \$53,900,000.! AIS membership rose to 8,037 in 1988.

At the spring convention in Oklahoma City a program was presented on research done on Scorch prepared by the Iowa State University.

Deaths reported for 1988 included the following: **Dovie Brady**, Texas, who won the Knowlton Medal in 1981 for her BB iris WHOOP 'EM UP; **Henry Danielson**, noted hybridizer of aril and arilbred irises, received the Hybridizer's Award in 1982. He won the C.G. White Award for STARS OVER CHICAGO, GENETIC DANCER, BIONIC BURST and SNOW OVER CHIAGO and the Mohr Award for his GENETIC BURSE and ARIL LADY; **Thomas E. Jacoby**, editor of the AIS Bulletin from 1960-64; **James A. Mahoney**, New Mexico, AIS Robins Chairman 1983-85; **Lura Roach**, hybridizer of such well known irises as SONG OF ERIN and WALTZING WIDOW.

1989: The Median Muster, first national meeting of the Median Iris Society, was held in Wakefield, MA, in May, 1989.

At the spring convention in Memphis the Board approved that irises sent from abroad for conventions are to be eligible for the Franklin Cook Cup.

At the fall Board meeting it was decided to divide the classification of Master judge into two areas: retired master judges who would not receive a ballot nor require further training; active master judges would remain active but be required to complete an activity report annually and obtain at least three hours of training every three years.

AIS membership was reported at 7,967. Section status was granted to the Historic Iris Preservation Society (HIPS).

Deaths reported in 1989 were as follows: **Nathan Rudolph**, Illinois, noted hybridizer of many award winning bearded irises. He won the Dykes Medal in 1975 for PINK TAFFETA and the Knowlton Award in the same year for DRESDEN FRILLS. He was awarded the Hybridizer's Medal in 1976; **Gordon W. Plough**, noted hybridizer from Wenatchee, WA, won two Sass Medals, the C.G. White Award. He also won numerous Awards of Merit for his intermediate and tall bearded irises such as WINNER'S CIRCLE, JAVA DOVE, SON OF STAR, PUNCHLINE and BUTTERSCOTCH KISS. He was awarded the Hybridizer's Medal in 1965; **Irwin Conroe**, instrumental in the organization of the Empire State Iris Society. He served three terms as RVP for Region 3; **Stanley Street**, noted hybridizer of arilbred median irises.

1990: In 1990 James W. Waddick made a trip to China to locate and bring back species irises. The Society for Pacific Coast Native Irises held their first Spring Expedition to see native irises in their local habitats. The Dr. Loomis Memorial Iris Trail Garden was started in Colorado Springs, CO.

At the fall Board meeting AIS membership was reported at 8,353.

The Board voted to have the Dykes Medal awarded annually, and that the iris with the most votes be awarded the Dykes Medal, with a run-off to be held in the case of a tie.

Deaths reported in 1990 include the following: **Mildred M. Brizendine**, noted median iris hybridizer of such irises as JOY BRINGER, LITTLE CHESTNUT and ZING, which won the Cook-Douglas Award in 1966. She, with her husband Roy, was awarded the Hybridizer's Medal in 1970; **Eleanor Hill**, Oklahoma, pioneer member of AIS and first RVP of Region 22; **Carol Lankow**, Washington, really enjoyed working with the medians, and introduced a number of them such as STRAW HAT, COUNTRY DEEJAY, ASK ALMA, which won the Sass Medal in 1994, and her border bearded, CALICO CAT, AM '93; **Lois "Jonnye" Rich**, noted

arilbred and Japanese iris hybridizer. She won the C. G. White Award for LOUD MOUTH and ZEMIRA; and the Payne Award for STAR AT MIDNIGHT and TUPTIM.

1991: In 1991 The Society for Louisiana Irises celebrated the 50th Anniversary of its founding.

At the AIS spring board meeting it was voted to amend the bylaws to add one Regional Vice President, to be elected by fellow RVPs, to full voting membership on the Board of Directors. Individual annual membership dues were raised to \$12.50. HIPS volunteered to reprint the 1939 Check List in soft cover. It was decided this should be an AIS project, with HIPS president Anne Lowe in charge of the reprint.

At the AIS fall board meeting in 1991 changes were made in the Awards system. A new medal for tall bearded irises, the "John Wister Memorial Medal", was established. This addition made a medal category for each class of irises. The medal winners will then compose the Dykes Medal list with medal winners to remain on the list for three years.

SIGNA proposed two new awards: (1) Founders of SIGNA Award for a species variety or cultivar shown to have exceptional garden merit; (2) Randolph-Perry Award for innovative hybrids involving iris species which have exceptional garden merit.

Deaths reported in 1991 include: **Bion Tolman**, Utah, iris hybridizer and two time RVP for Region 12; **Larry Gaulter**, former member of the Board of Directors and well known hybridizer of tall bearded. His MARY FRANCES won the Dykes Medal in 1979, and he was awarded the Hybridizer's Medal in 1978; **Lucy Fry**, AIS membership chairman and hybridizer of dwarf and median irises.

1992: In 1992 the book *The Japanese Iris* by Dr. Currier McEwen became available. This is the first definitive book in English on Japanese irises.

Membership in spring of 1992 was reported at 8,408. AIS Archives had to be moved from the Ponca Public Library building. HIPS was given the task of finding a permanent library or storage for the AIS Archives.

At the fall 1992 Board meeting the By-Laws of AIS were revised; Directors changed to 13, and revision with regard to the Sections and their relationship to the parent Society. Preparations were started for the 75th Anniversary celebration in 1995, with Jim Rasmussen as Chairman of the Committee. There will be a special

poster and commemorative issue of the Bulletin, and a commemorative medal will be struck.

There was a change in the eligibility for HM awards; bearded irises eligible two years after introduction and beardless three years after introduction.

The Louisiana Iris Society of America (LISA) merged with the Society for Louisiana Irises (SLI). The Society for Louisiana Irises became a cooperating society of the AIS.

Eligibility was defined for the new medals being awarded - C.G. White, Mohr, Williamson-White, Nies, Mitchell, Payne, Founders of SIGNA, Randolph-Perry and the new Wister Medal for tall bearded.

Deaths reported in 1992 included: **Melba B. Hamblen**, Utah, noted hybridizer and tireless worker for AIS. She served on the Board of Directors, the AIS Foundation Board; also President of the Foundation. She was awarded the Hybridizers Medal, The Distinguished Service Medal, The AIS Gold Medal and the Foster Memorial Plaque from the British Iris Society; **Monty Byers**, California, worked avidly in the areas of remontant and novelty classes of irises, of which CONJURATION is perhaps his best known tall bearded, and which won an Award of Merit in 1994; **Joseph A. Gatty**, California, noted hybridizer of bearded irises. He won Awards of Merit for many, such as WHITE LIGHTNING, PLAYGIRL, PARADISE, PRECIOUS MOMENTS, BEAU, WINK, JOYFUL, BOLD PRINT, VAMP. He was awarded the Cook-Douglas Medal for STARRY EYED and the Sass Medal three times. He was awarded the Hybridizer's Medal in 1980; **Walt Luhn**, California, hybridizer of tall bearded irises such as DARK FURY, DUSKY DANCER, TEMPLE GOLD, HONEY MOCHA and SONG OF NORWAY for which he won the Dykes Medal in 1986. He was awarded the Hybridizer's Medal in 1984; **Harley E. Briscoe**, worked mainly with median irises and Siberians. His MRS NATE RUDOLPH won the Cook-Douglas Medal and his Siberian STEVE VARNER won the Ira Wood Medal in 1982 and the Morgan-Wood Medal in 1987; **Adolph Vogt**, former Board member and hybridizer of Japanese irises. He won the Payne Award for ORIENTAL EYES and LILAC PEAKS.

1993: In 1993 Nancy Harkins of Tulsa, OK, won the contest for the best design for the Wister Medal. A special pin was designed to be given to retiring RVPs at the completion of their term of office. A new keeper award was designed to be given to the winners of the Franklin Cook Memorial Award, President's Cup and Walther Award.

The first Siberian Iris Convention was held in East Lansing, Michigan in June, 1993. The Median Spree for '93 was held in Oklahoma City in April.

At the fall, 1993 board meeting Dresden, Tennessee was chosen as the site of the AIS Library. Membership was reported at 8,190.

Deaths reported in 1993 include the following: **Charles W. Army**, noted hybridizer of Louisiana irises such as CLYDE REDMOND, CLARA GOULA, ACADIAN MISS. He won twelve DeBaillon Awards and received the Hybridizer's Medal in 1968; **H. C. Mohr**, longtime hybridizer of such tall bearded irises as BRIDE'S HALO, for which he won the Dykes Medal in 1978; **Raymond C. Allen**, former AIS director, He also served as Scientific Chairman, on the National Test Garden Committee and on the committee resulting in the formation of The American Iris Society Foundation; **James M. Gibson**, hybridizer for fifty years, known primarily for his work in plicatas from WILD GINGER, RANCHO ROSE, QUEEN IN CALICO to GOING MY WAY and KILT LILT for which he won the Dykes Medal in 1976. He was awarded the Hybridizer's Award in 1965; **Geddes Douglas**, editor of the AIS Bulletin from 1946-60 and noted hybridizer of such irises as AMANDINE, MIMOSA GOLD, DRUM MAJOR, LILLIPUT. Together with Paul Cook, he was responsible for the first SDBs to be introduced from *I. pumila* and tall bearded breeding. In recognition of this contribution the Cook-Douglas Medal is awarded each year to an outstanding SDB; **Leon C. Wolford**, past president of AIS 1978-80. He was a tireless worker for AIS and served on the Board, the Foundation, the Awards Committee, as well as RVP for Region 17. He was also hybridized in the areas of tall bearded and Louisianas.

1994: In the October, 1994 Bulletin it was announced that the Missouri Botanical Gardens, St. Louis, MO would be the site of the first American International Symposium "Gardening with Iris Species", in March, 1995.

500 commemorative medals will be struck to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of AIS in 1995. Membership was noted at 8,221.

Deaths reported in 1994 included: **Carol H. Ramsey** who served as an AIS Director, Secretary and Membership Secretary. She was also president of the Median Iris Society and was awarded the AIS Gold Medal in 1991; **Kay Nelson-Keppel**, who served the AIS for many years as Advertising Editor of the Bulletin and AIS Register, and also worked diligently each year on the Awards Committee. She was awarded the AIS Gold Medal in 1993.

BENCHMARKS OF AN ERA

PRESIDENTS OF THE AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY

John C. Wister	1920-34	Hubert A. Fischer	1966-68
Harry H. Everett	1935-39	William T. Bledsoe	1969-71
William J. McKee	1940-42	Hugo Wall	1972-74
Jesse E. Wills	1943-46	J. Clarke Cosgrove	1975-77
Franklin P. Cook	1947-48	Leon C. Wolford	1978-80
Guy Rogers	1949-52	Harold L. Stahly	1981-83
Harold W. Knowlton	1953-55	Ronald Mullin	1984-86
Marion R. Walker	1956-59	James Rasmussen	1987-89
Lowell F. Randolph	1960-62	Kenneth M. Waite	1990-92
Robert S. Carney	1963-65	Claire Bryant Barr	1993-

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY GOLD MEDAL RECIPIENTS

John C. Wister	1930	Melba Hamblen	1983
Grace Sturtevant	1935	Bee Warburton	1985
Ethel Anson Peckham	1940	Carol Ramsey	1992
Lowell F. Randolph	1970	Kay Nelson-Keppel	1994
Jay C. Ackerman	1976	Robert Schreiner	1994

ANNUAL CONVENTIONS

Following is a list of the AIS National Conventions by year and location.

1970	New York, NY	1983	Boston, MA
1971	Wichita, KS	1984	Seattle, WA
1972	Portland, OR	1985	Indianapolis, IN
1973	Philadelphia, PA	1986	San Jose, CA
1974	Roanoke, VA	1987	Phoenix, AZ
1975	San Diego, CA	1988	Oklahoma City, OK
1976	Lansing, MI	1989	Memphis, TN
1977	Memphis, TN	1990	Omaha, NE
1978	San Jose, CA	1991	Washington, DC
1979	Huntsville, AL	1992	Atlanta, GA
1980	Tulsa, OK	1993	Fort Worth, TX
1981	St. Louis, MO	1994	Portland, OR
1982	Denver, CO	1995	York, PA

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY HYBRIDIZER'S MEDAL RECIPIENTS

Wylie M. Ayres	1941	W. A. Payne	1964
Sydney B. Mitchell	1941	James M. Gibson	1965
J. C. Nichols	1941	Gordon W. Plough	1965
Hans P. Sass	1941	Walker Ferguson	1966
Jacob Sass	1941	Georgie Hinkle	1966
L. Merton Gage	1943	Bee Warburton	1966
Clarence White	1943	Charles W. Army	1967
E. O. Essig	1944	Clara B. Rees	1967
Phillip Loomis	1944	Opal Brown	1968
Carl Salbach	1944	Fred W. Cassebeer	1968
David F. Hall	1944	Roy & Mildred	
Harry Lee Grant	1944	Brizendine	1970
R. E. Kleinsorge	1944	Clifford W. Benson	1971
E. Greig Lapham	1945	G. Percy Brown	1971
Paul Cook	1945	Rex & Alta Brown	1972
Kenneth D. Smith	1947	Ben R. Hager	1973
Agnes Whiting	1947	Neva Sexton	1973
Robert J. Graves	1949	Bennett C. Jones	1974
Geddes Douglas	1949	Keith R. Keppel	1974
F. Cleveland Morgan	1950	Sanford Babson	1975
Isabella Preston	1950	Earl Roberts	1975
Elizabeth Nesmith	1951	O. Currier McEwen	1976
Eric E. Nies	1951	William G. McGarvey	1976
Fred DeForest	1952	Nathan Rudolph	1976
Orville W. Fay	1952	Larry A. Gaulter	1978
William J. McKee	1953	Joseph J. Ghio	1979
Charles S. Milliken	1953	Joseph A. Gatty	1980
Bernard, Constance		Nora Scopes	1982
& Robert Schreiner	1954	Henry Danielson	1983
Jesse E. Wills	1954	Walt Luihn	1985
Jean Stevens	1955	Joseph Mertzweiler	1985
Tell Muhlstein	1956	Doris Foster	1986
Edward Watkins	1957	O. David Niswonger	1986
Walter Welch	1957	Lois "Jonnye" Rich	1987
Henry E. Sass	1958	Eleanor McCown	1989
Mrs. Franklin P. Lowry	1959	George Shoop	1991
Melba Hamblen	1961	Lloyd Zurbrigg	1992
William B. Schortman	1961	Bernard Hamner	1992
Tom Craig	1962	Mary Louise	
Chet W. Tompkins	1962	Dunderman	1993
Charles Reckamp	1963	Mary Dunn	1993
		Allan Ensminger	1994

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL RECIPIENTS

Harry H. Everett	1941	Edwin E. Rundlett	1969
Benjamin Y. Morrison	1941	J. Arthur Nelson	1970
Robert S. Sturtevant	1941	Wilma Vallette	1970
William J. McKee	1943	William T. Bledsoe	1971
Charles F. Gersdorff	1944	Bee Warburton	1972
Clarence P. Connell	1944	Raymond C. Allen	1972
J. Marion Shull	1944	Robert V. Schreiner	1972
Louise J. Blake	1945	Melba Hamblen	1973
Jesse E. Wills	1947	Jake Scharff	1973
Howard R. Watkins	1947	Hugo Wall	1974
Franklin P. Cook	1949	William H. Peck	1974
Junious P. Fishburn	1949	Ira E. Wood	1974
E. Greig Lapham	1950	Elizabeth A. Wood	1974
Caroline Dorman	1950	Earl T. Browder1	1975
Lowell F. Randolph	1951	Harriet Segesseemann	1975
Fred W. Cassebeer	1952	Glenn F. Hanson	1976
Guy Rogers	1952	J. Clarke Cosgrove	1977
Barbara Walther	1953	Philip W. Edinger	1978
Harry J. Randall	1955	Bennett C. Jones	1979
Harold W. Knowlton	1955	Richard T. Pettijohn	1979
Geddes Douglas	1956	Keith R. Keppel	1980
Mrs George D. Robinson	1957	Kenneth M. Waite	1980
William J. Moffat	1958	Leon C. Wolford	1980
Marion R. Walker	1959	Mrs. Edward Owen	1982
Carl O. Schirmer	1959	John Harvey	1982
Dr. Matthew C. Riddle	1960	Jean G. Witt	1983
Minnie Colquitt	1962	Marie Caillet	1984
Donald G. Waters	1962	Allan Ensminger	1984
John A. Bartholomew	1963	Dorothy Howard	1984
Jay C. Ackerman	1964	Carol Ramsey	1984
Thomas E. Jacoby	1964	Harold Stahly	1984
Claude C. O'Brien	1964	Adolph Vogt	1985
Robert S. Carney	1965	Ben R. Hager	1986
Kenneth D. Smith	1965	Ronald Mullin	1987
Philip A. Loomis	1966	Ellen Rockwell	1988
Larry A. Gaulter	1967	James Burch	1990
John C. Wister	1968	Kay Nelson	1990
Ada Buxton	1968	Catherine Long Gates	1993
Peggy Burke Grey	1968	Jeanne Stayer	1993
John R. Durrance	1968	C. J. Lack	1994
Hubert A. Fischer	1968	Hilda Crick	1994
Ethel Ricker	1969		

Dykes Medal Winners



RUFFLED BALLETT
(E. Roderick '75) DM'83



MYSTIQUE
(J. Ghio '75) DM'80



VANITY
(B. Hager '75) DM'82



VICTORIA FALLS
(Schreiner '77) DM'84



BEVERLY SILLS
(B. Hager '79) DM'85

Dykes Medal Winners



EVERYTHING PLUS
(D. Niswonger '84) DM'91



TITAN'S GLORY
(Schreiner '81) DM'88



SONG OF NORWAY
(W. Luhn '79) DM'86



DUSKY CHALLENGER
(Schreiner '86) DM'92



EDITH WOLFORD
(B. Hager '86) DM'93

Fall Bearded Iris

INTERVIEW WITH BOB, DAVE, & RAY SCHREINER

November 1994

THE PAST 25 YEARS.

Are there specific irises in the past that represent major changes or significant breakthroughs in iris breeding?

Bob: Not one iris, but entire species arose, plants were grown by fanciers and hobbyists alike and the progress was slow and steady.

Dave: There are new patterns that we did not see 25 years ago. These are not necessarily breakthroughs in breeding, however, they are smaller achievements that are maturing over time. I don't think we have seen big breakthroughs such as WHOLE CLOTH (Cook '56) and SNOW FLURRY (Rees '39).

Ray: I don't think there is just one iris that was a breakthrough, there have been breakthroughs in certain lines. NAVY STRUT (Schreiner '72) was one of the leaders in the ruffled darks, from this we got new improvement on form. NAVY STRUT is involved in parentage of TITAN'S GLORY (Schreiner '81), MASTER TOUCH (Schreiner '80) and SILVERADO (Schreiner '87) the most recent Dykes Medal Winner.

What form changes have you seen developed over the past years?

Bob: The form of the iris evolved from the wild. Different Iris breeders centered on development of certain features.

Dave: The form seems to have matured into a fuller flower with good substance and good ruffling. Gus (Schreiner) would cross ROCOCO (Schreiner '60) behind our dark lines to get these beautifully large ruffled flowers with tremendous substance.

Ray: We've seen more ruffling, increased bud count and flowers with good substance to hold up under weather conditions. This has occurred on our darks and blue lines, we are working towards this in the whole color scheme.

Dave: We also have seen more space age iris develop, more horns and flounces, we have even seen some standards flop down like Japanese Iris. I would say Schreiner's Iris are a bit more conservative, we like the traditional form of the iris, the symmetry, it's an aesthetic judgment.

What color and pattern changes have evolved in the past?

Bob: There have been variations and embellishments from the whole spectrum in varieties selected and amplified.

Dave: Streaking patterns such as BATIK (Ensminger '85), developing different color combinations within the Iris like red beards on blue Iris, blue beards on pink Iris. (Melba Hamblen worked on this.)

Ray: The luminatas have come a long way, the Keith Keppel line is a good example, SPIRIT WORLD ('94) and MIND READER ('94) are two classic ones. I think the colors have better clarity and brightness. There are different variations of bands and rims that we have been working on.

THE PRESENT

What do you consider the major objectives of iris plant breeding today?

Bob: I think the two things that I see is the improvement of stamina and the adaptability of the iris to the various climates and weather, also the glorification of colors that the Iris genus contains.

Dave: Our objectives should be to breed Iris that are disease resistant with excellent growth and bloom habits. I think that is

why you still see STEPPING OUT (Schreiner '64) on the popularity poll after all these years. It is an Iris that performs well all over the country with little effort.

Ray: We are breeding with disease resistance in mind, also increased bud count, vigor, reblooming tendencies and any new color range or break.

What are some color and pattern changes that you are currently working on?

Bob: What form, color and plant habit that can be embellished, as in the raising of seedlings, some individual ones offer some stimuli toward variation and improvement.

Dave: We haven't given up on the fire engine red Iris, we are still toying in reds. We have some great banded ones we are working on, (CC785-B), the HONKY TONK BLUES line (CC77-1) is creating lots of beautiful seedlings, RIPPLING RIVER (Schreiner '95) is a fantastic ruffled blue.

Ray: We are basically working on the whole spectrum. We are working on bright new beards with different colors, different variations on plicatas, brighter pinks and oranges, deeper blacks with different color beards and pleasing color combinations, the possibilities are endless.

THE FUTURE

What color changes may be expected in the future?

Bob: As the color changes, the entire range has hardly been sampled and the science of color pigmentation has hardly been looked at, for instance Paul Werckmeister was just the beginning in his analysis of iris pigments. There is still so much to be studied.

Dave: Your imagination is the only limit here, there is an endless array of possibilities, for instance, Keith Keppel's SPIRIT WORLD ('94) and MIND READER ('94) is a newer pattern that we could hardly imagine.

Ray: Sometimes you think that's it, there aren't any more new color combos, then the seedlings bloom and boom, something catches your eye... it's always changing.

Which patterns may see dramatic changes in the future?

Dave: Possibly the streaking or mottled pattern HONKY TONK BLUES (Schreiner '88), the reverse amoenas, Joe Gatty's IN REVERSE ('93) Paul Black's WINTER ADVENTURE ('92) and the GYPSY WOMAN (Schreiner '85) line to name a few. I think it will be more of a maturing of what we have now, not really any dramatic new ones.

Is there potential for future change (with diploids or tetraploids)?

Dave: I think Tall Bearded history has been written, it's happened with 75 years of tetraploidy. Certain species of Iris could introduce some real plant vigor, I think these were Dad's hopes and goals to introduce fresh genes into the bloodlines that could help the vigor and bring about unique patterns in the future. Standard Dwarf Bearded Iris have spot patterns and blue beards, somehow bringing those into the tall bearded bloodlines.

Are there any current obstacles that will affect future breeding?

Bob: As I see it, there are no obstacles, just the continuing work and study of the Iris. (and costs, labor) I feel that *Garden Irises*, edited by L. F. Randolph and published by the American Iris Society, have hardly been amplified or used. There is still so much material to study.

Dave: I would say opportunities, not obstacles. With the right kind of research, someone is going to tap into some gene splicing. If the red gene is missing in the Iris, someone possibly with the right type of technology could take a related plant like a Gladiola. We have been doing the traditional hand pollination, we have inherited it from our Grandfather and Parents, but technology can change much about the way we do things.

Ray: Definitely no obstacles, but endless opportunities. I think there is so much more work to be done with the Iris of today that will be enjoyed by many tomorrow.

PINK COLOR IN IRISES: A PARALLEL HISTORY

by Ben Hager

The American Iris society was organized in 1920. At approximately the same time, a cross was made between two irises, the identity of which and, indeed whether it was a purposeful cross or an open pod, we will never know. The plants from that seed pod included one iris that was named GOLD FISH and registered in 1925. This plant forecast (in retrospect) the most startling and original color break in iris history: it had tangerine beards! Although GOLD FISH never appeared in the lineage of our modern pinks, those beards were at least a prophecy of things to come. It did carry the pink genes as I proved to myself years later. I crossed BALLERINA X GOLD FISH - there were eleven seedlings and every one was a clear pink with tangerine beards - the cross made its point.

Shortly thereafter, 1929-30, two more iris seedlings showed up with tangerine beards, but their color, according to Geddes Douglas, (article in AIS Bulletin 107, October, 1947, and the BIS yearbook 1947) was a muddy blue: BARBAROSA (Dr. James Kirkland, not registered) and a seedling by T.A. Washington. It is not apparent that the Washington seedling appeared in later parentages but BARBAROSA is included in one later parentage, at least. Unfortunately for the search for "pink" backgrounds, the parentage of none of these first three irises with tangerine beards are known.

Then it happened. Dr. P.A. Loomis of Colorado Springs made a cross with the pollen of ((W.J. Fryer [variegata background]) x Ricardi [a form of *Iris mesopotamica*]) onto a "plicata" (?) and the first bud on one of the seedlings from the cross showed a true pink color, opening into what became the first PINK iris ever seen: SEASHELL (with tangerine beards, of course). At about this same time he made a cross that produced MOROCCO ROSE ((Lent A. Williamson x ? Jacquesiana) x F70 (W.J. Fryer x Ricardi; as above)) which was not a pink in itself but was the parent widely used by other breeders to further the pink line. Dr. Loomis got his first introduced pink by crossing SEASHELL and MOROCCO ROSE; it was SPINDRIFT (R. 1929).

From one of these parents, W.J. Fryer (Fryer 1917) no exact background is known except that it is a diploid and since it is a variegata color pattern, undoubtedly goes back to *Iris variegata*.

We now know that it takes the presence of four chromosomes with pink genes for pink color in the genetics of an iris to produce this recessive color. That is why it never appeared until breeding began with the tetraploid species and the new allotetraploids (which are crosses between diploid and tetraploid parents that produce tetraploid progeny by way of an unreduced gamut from the diploid parent - a rare occurrence).

The next of these iris to display the "break" was ISOBOLINA (Sidney B. Mitchell - its first bloom was probably around 1930). This iris was not registered and was hardly even noticed by its originator. It was a sister to HAPPY DAYS (Mitchell 1934). At that time breeders were more interested in developing a large tetraploid yellow. Yellow coloring was fairly common among the *Iris variegata* x *Iris pallida* hybrids but had not yet advanced into the tetraploid group. With the advent of W.R. DYKES and its child HAPPY DAYS, that quest was realized. Nobody ever dreamed of the possibility that W.R. DYKES and its sister seedling, GUDRUN held the secret which was the PINK color. The parentage of W.R. DYKES is probably (Moonlight [Dykes] x ?). From it the pink genes were passed on to its two children.

As for ISABOLINA, W.R. DYKES was the pollen parent. The pod parent includes a vast conglomeration of iris (33 varieties and species that lists several that are in the history of other pink irises. It was (or is, if it still exists) a muddy, buffy pink with no substance but with the tangerine beards, and it did play a part in the pink development.

In the year 1935, Dave Hall found a seedling in his patch with tangerine beards out of (DOG ROSE X MARQUISETTE) but it was not blessed with progeny.

In 1939 the iris MELITZA appeared in the check list. Its parentage is, sorry to say, more guess work by way of elimination than based on actual knowledge, so it seems to me to be a bit unreasonable to depend on the given parentage as a source of pink genes, although there are some descendants of *Iris variegata* in there. Never-the-less, MELITZA (Nesmith 1940) was widely used and productive in its contribution to the pink lines. Its color is a

tannish-buff blend with tangerine beards.

The same year, 1939, Geddes Douglas registered TITIAN LADY a tangerine bearded white out of (((Sdlg 213 A White x (Francesca [no parentage] x Gudrun)) x Jeb Stuart))). This one also produced appropriate seedlings in further crosses.

The Sass brothers entered the picture with the 1941 introduction of FLORA ZENOR (Jake Sass) with the deepest pink color yet - but from quite different lines of breeding. FLORA ZENOR is out of (DORE' x ?). That helps! What that "?" represents would certainly be interesting but - ? DORE' is out of (WAMBLISKA x RAMESES). Neither has appeared in the pink line before this, but it is arguable that it is a correct parentage. WAMBLISKA and PURISSIMA are sister seedlings in parentage and both are known to have produced pale pink children when they are crossed directly to a pink. RAMESES has two shots of *Iris variegata* (probably through hybrids) from KING TUT. (The discussion of the influence of *Iris variegata* comes a little later). FLORA ZENOR was widely used with great success in future generations of pink breeding.

Next we meet the greatest of the developer and breeders of pink irises, David Hall.

Hall's primary cross was 36-1 or 36-11, two seedlings with the same parentage which was (W.R. DYKES x DOLLY MADISON). These two were both crossed to MOROCCO ROSE (Loomis) which came from ((LENT A. WILLIAMSON x ?) X (W.J. FRYER x RICARDI)). Two seedlings were numbered: 38-26 with 36-1 and 39-26 with 36-11. Ricardi is a form of *Iris mesopotamica*. On this base the Hall pinks were founded. Iris from other breeders were occasionally added early on, mainly those of the Sass brothers such as PRAIRIE SUNSET, AMITOLA, RAMESES. DAUNTLESS (Connelly 1929) also played a role. This pretty well proves that several of the Sass irises do carry the pink genes.

Dave Hall was not one to introduce new irises into his breeding lines once he had established them to his satisfaction. It is reported that he once remarked that he had tried to do just that, and the results were discouraging. But the close breeding resulted in many of his pretty pink irises being rather weak growers - not so much so that they were not widely grown and very popular.

In 1951 the first Dykes Medal was voted to CHERIE and that was the real triumph for the early days of PINK irises.

David Hall was credited with keeping quite complete records of his breeding crosses, but he seemed reluctant to divulge these records along with the registration and introduction of these varieties, as a search in the check lists will reveal. It is almost as if he were keeping his methods to himself. However, it seems that it was not difficult to obtain these parentages: Geddes Douglas was able to publish the complete ancestry of *CHERIE* in the *BIS Yearbook 1947*. That parentage is quite enlightening compared to the "from two flamingo pink seedlings" to quote (and translate the abbreviations) in the 1949 check list. Most of the Hall breeding information above was retrieved from the Douglas articles (1944 and 1947 Bulletins) and from Keith Keppel.

That is not the end of the "original pinks". In 1945 Sir Cedric Morris introduced *EDWARD OF WINDSOR* in England, from completely different backgrounds. Another of those incomplete and uninformative parentages is given in the 1949 check list: "Yellow *plicata* x Yellow *plicata* seedling". That is correct as far as it goes, but we now know, again through Geddes Douglas, that in fact the breeding consisted of twelve generations of inter-crossing seedlings that originated from seedlings with three varieties (only): *SACRAMENTO* (the *plicata*), *GOLDEN HIND* (yellow from W.R. Dykes) and *MARY GEDDES* (a pinkish blend).

So where did pink color come from? If all the "original pink" varieties are diagramed out we can see definite trends. *Iris variegata* has been proposed as the beginning of "pink" before this, but it did not show because *variegata* itself and all of its early hybrids with *Iris pallida* were diploids and as has already been noted, pink color in irises can only be demonstrated in the tetraploid range. So far, my own limited observation would uphold that theory. Pink color has a definite link with yellows: W.R. DYKES (and its cream parent *MOONLIGHT*) and its seedlings, *HAPPY DAY*, *GOLDEN HIND*, and more distant relatives *GOLDEN EAGLE* and *GOLD RUFFLES*—these without doubt carry the genes for pink. We need to inquire as to where the yellow color in our irises originated. There is no yellow in the various forms of *Iris pallida* nor in the tetraploid species. That leaves us with *Iris variegata* as the yellow source. Add to the yellows we know that carry the pink genes, the squalens (blends) that have yellowish infusions and we get the Sass blends: *PRAIRIE SUNSET*, *MIDWEST GEM*, *AMITOLA*, *KING TUT*, etc. and others.

All of the tetraploid species *Iris mesopotamica* (RICARDI, a form of *mesopotamica*), *I. cypriana*, *I. amas* (also known as *macrantha*), *I. trojana* (not as often) and the allotetraploids from crosses of diploid X tetraploid are abundant in the pink backgrounds, but did they pick it up in crosses with diploid *I. variegata* hybrids—(W.J. FRYER [a *variegata* hybrid] x RICARDI) as an example?

Here we must not forget the PURISSIMA-WAMBLISKA team ((*cypriana* x *I. pallida*) x *mesopotamica*) X (Juniata x *mesopotamica*). Three tetraploid species, one diploid species, and one diploid hybrid, a BLUE. Where is *I. variegata*? Yet these two varieties carry the pink genes, so it seems?

THE MIDDLE YEARS

1950 began the new period of crossing the varieties from the "original" pinks. Now that they were beginning to understand the inheritance patterns of the pink genes the new group of breeders were able to direct more attention to plant vigor, flower form and clearer colors.

Craig Lapham had introduced his first pink in 1946. BARBARA LUDDY combines two earlier pink lines: Loomis' SPINDRIFT with Nesmith's MELITZA. He probably made a cross at about the same time of Loomis' SPINDRIFT by Mitchell's ISOBOLINA which became the pollen parent of his beautiful PARADISE PINK. The pod parent recalls the origins of the earlier pinks; it was a red bitone (R9D in the check list). FORERUNNER (1949) was (ROSALBA x Opera [a diploid] x RED RAY [Red Sails x Jerry]). Lapham introduced other pink iris afterward, most of them various varieties crossed to PARADISE PINK including one of my favorites at the time, LOTTIE LEMBRICK—a lovely pink and orchid bicolor overlooked completely by the judges—makes me wonder if my iris critique is up to standard!

Concurrently, Orville Fay was creating some remarkable advances in pink and tangerine bearded irises. He won the second and third Dykes Medals for, not pink but out of pink breeding and retaining the colorful tangerine beards: MARY RANDAL, DM'54 and RIPPLING WATERS, DM'66, a pink and orchid blend with the beards. His line was built mostly on the Hall lines with additions of SNOW FLURRY and *Iris pallida* to bring form, vigor and hardiness

into the line. Notable pinks introduced by Orville Fay are PINK CAMEO (1944), NEW HORIZON (1946), NATIVE DANCER (1953) and FLEETA (1956).

Another prolific iris breeder working as one of the three in the early-mid-season period was Fred DeForest. He developed several fine pinks based on Loomis' SQ72 (Pikes Peak Pink), MELITZA and a seedling 6-44 ((SALAR x SANDIA) x PRAIRIE SUNSET) with a dollop of Hall's PINK SENSATION in the last of his introduced pinks: ALICE CHRIST (1959). Other pinks of fond memories were his CARABELLA (1948), CLOUDCAP (1950), the largest of all pinks, and FRANCES KENT (1952).

Some of the finest pinks from this period came from Tell Muhestein. Using the workhorse, Loomis' SQ72 and "TYPE DORE" (SEASHELL x ?) in combination with Hall's GOLDEN EAGLE, Sdlg 40-10 (GOLDEN EAGLE x sdlg 36-1 ((W.R. DYKES x DOLLY MADISON) x MOROCCO ROSE) and Sdlg 39-62: Sdlg 36-1 x MOROCCO ROSE), plus his own pink breeding yellow, GOLD RUFFLES (1948, MARY RICH LION x MIDWEST GEM), Tell's pinks are outstanding examples of new vigor, stature, form and color. He won the Dykes Medal with SWAN BALLETT, a white, but not with any of his pinks, which, in retrospect, seems to be an unfortunate neglect. All were fine irises: PINK FORMAL (1947), PARTY DRESS (1951), and in 1954: JUNE MEREDITH, PINK ENCHANTMENT and PINK FULFILLMENT.

THE RECENT PERIOD

We now enter the current period of the development of pink irises with the consistent and on-going improvements and spectacle in the color class.

Beginning with ONE DESIRE (1960), George Shoop has enhanced our iris gardens with some of the most fabulous tangerine bearded varieties in selfs, bitones, bicolors and whatever else our imaginations might dream up - and is continuing to do so. Based on Hall and Muhlestein pinks, he has introduced such beauties as SO FARE (1980), SPRING TIDINGS (1989), BLUSHING DUCHESS (1990), ISLAND DANCER (1991) and many, many more.

Others in this period have been and are contributors of high quality to this family of pink irises: Melba Hamblen, going all the

way back to ORANGE PARADE (1961), practically the beginning of tangerine bearded oranges, TOUCHE (1969), CHRISTMAS RUBIES (1978), a "T" white, LOVELY KAY (1980), purest pink, EXTRAVAGANZA (1983), to PRIVATE STOCK (1991). Glen Corlew gave us CHERUB CHOIR (1968).

Joseph Gatty produced a long line of closely bred and lovely pinks from PLAY GIRL (1977), PARADISE (1980), EDEN (1983), PRESENCE (1987) for color, to the new ruffled pink COMING UP ROSES (1992).

Nathan Rudolph gave us PINK ANGEL (1973), CARVED PINK (1975) (substance!), and the Dykes Medalist PINK TAFFETA (1968).

William Newhard's PINK PIROUETTE (1969), combining the Fay and DeForest lines, deserved more recognition than it got.

A lot of effort has gone into the long line of pinks from Vernon Wood and it has paid off. Wide petals, ruffled and fluted, distinguish his introductions such as PINK BELLE (1983), PINK GALA (1989) and the tangerine bearded white offshoot from the pinks: SILVER FOX (1990).

Then there are my own pinks which linked with almost everything that went before (see diagram on pages 12-13 of the July 1990 Bulletin #278).

Along the way the tangerine beards drifted away from the pink petals and found new and very satisfactory homes on petals of different colors. Today we can find tangerine beards on whites, yellows, blues, orchids, buffs, browns, reds and near blacks! Wonderfully transient those tangerine beards! Yet, crossed back to pink, all of those colors will still give us tangerine bearded pinks.

Seventy-five years of pink development to parallel the Seventy-five years of the growth of The American Iris Society, and both are doing very well, thank you! Yellow coloring in the tetraploid tall bearded irises covered about the same period of development, but the first of that color strain came from England: W.R. DYKES, named and registered in 1926 by his wife, Katherine Dykes, after his death in an automobile accident. She later died in a railroad accident—oh, the contributions of modern technology! It was the first great yellow, but of course it carried those pink genes that furthered the pink lines also.

But pink in irises was an American innovation almost entirely,

and that is worth celebrating.

The worth and popularity of the pink and tangerine bearded irises has been demonstrated by the number of Dykes Medals they have won:

CHERIE (Hall, 1951 DM)

MARY RANDALL (Fay, 1954 DM)

RIPPLING WATERS (Fay, 1966 DM)

PINK TAFFETA (Rudolph, 1975 DM)

VANITY (Hager, 1982 DM)

BEVERLY SILLS (Hager, 1985 DM)

You will notice that this is a pretty tight group. Each one in sequence has contributed to the next in line. The only exception is RIPPLING WATERS which does not appear in the parentage of PINK TAFFETA or VANITY but returns in BEVERLY SILLS which boasts all five of the other Dykes Medal irises in its parentage.

So where do we go from here?

SOURCES: Phil Edinger, Keith Keppel, Geddes Douglas, articles (AIS Bulletin #92, 1944, AIS Bulletin #107, 1947, BIS Yearbook, 1947), AIS Check Lists

VARIEGATED FLOWER COLOR

by Allen Ensminger

Most everyone is familiar with BATIK. BATIK sometimes, for a season, reverts back to an Iris resembling in color its *plicata* parent. In our opinion it is far more attractive as a variegated Iris with white background color and royal purple streaks and splashes.

There has been much conjecture as to what happens to make an Iris variegated. Following is an explanation that appears plausible.

The anthocyanins, the pigments in Iris blossoms in the blue and red ranges, can remain hidden. There are Irises which contain anthocyanin as a so-called pseudobase. This state of anthocyanin as a pseudobase seems to be extremely unstable.

We should not be surprised if in the Iris flower the slightest difference in the chemical or physical conditions of the cell sap renders the anthocyanins visible or makes them disappear. If the anthocyanins become visible in only a few cells and not in others, distinct irregular spots and splashes will result.

The first variegated flower occurred among seedlings in our garden back in 1968. This color break proved eventually to be genetically transmitted, especially when one parent is a plicata.

The first plant appeared to have genetic links between good substance and poor branching with low bud count and variegated flower color. It has taken many generations to achieve an acceptable stalk with seven or more buds.

We have been able to get variegated flowers in various colors. Some people like them because the color pattern for every flower is different and the contrast in color is dramatic.

There also has appeared a number of different kinds of variegation. The varieties BATIK and PAINTED PLIC and BRINDLED BEAUTY demonstrate three of the variables.

We are fortunate that a number of hybridizers are now involved in producing variegated Irises. Soon every garden will have Irises of variegated color intermingled with the more conventional colors and color patterns.

VARIEGATED FOLIAGE

by Allen Ensminger

The green and white foliage of any variegated plant can be very attractive. Many gardens share space for the Iris ZEBRA. ZEBRA has been around for 100 years or more and may continue to be grown for many more years because of its beautiful variegated foliage.

ZEBRA appears to be a true Chimera. Its variegated foliage is very desirable because it has a stable pattern and it does not attempt to revert to all green foliage. The mother plant and all of its increase have half of each leaf, the half closest to the center of primary growth, with cells that have no genes for chlorophyll.

It is doubtful if this variegated foliage pattern in ZEBRA can be transmitted to its progeny. We have never had a ZEBRA seedling with variegated foliage.

We have had many beautiful variegated foliage seedlings that are tetraploid. This variegation, in most cases, is unstable. For several years the plant must be rogued of the all green leaves. Eventually the plant gives up trying to get well and remains variegated.

These tetraploid variegated foliage plants are randomly variegated. There is no established pattern.

The most beautiful of these variegated foliage plants have leaves with a purple base. This results in tri-colored leaves. Where the purple base extends up into the white portion of the leaf, it sometimes appears to be quadri-colored.

A hybridizing goal is for quadri-colored foliage and a variegated flower in the same plant. This is entirely possible but perhaps not in my life time.

Fortunately there are younger hybridizers who are working to attain this goal so it is in your future.

Save the spot now occupied by ZEBRA for this beautiful Iris that will remain attractive in your garden from early spring until late fall.

POPULAR Plicatas

by Keith Keppel

The first American Dykes Medal went to the plicata SAN FRANCISCO in 1927, but it was 41 years later before a second plicata could win this honor. In contrast, the past quarter-century has been a golden age for development and interest in "plics", with three additional Dykes winners: KILT LILT (1976), JESSE'S SONG (1990), and EVERYTHING PLUS (1991). During the past twenty five years, 34 Awards of Merit have been voted to tall bearded plicatas.

Progress is based on prior achievement, so any discussion of current plicata breeding should give credit where due. There are three plics of the sixties that had a profound influence on plicata breeding. ROCOCO (Schreiner '60) brought ruffling to a class that was typically not-up-to-speed in the form department. This modernization inspired many breeders, traditionally shunning the plicata class, to embark on plicata projects. Initial enthusiasm was heightened by the appearance of STEPPING OUT (Schreiner '64), 1968 Dykes Medal winner and garden subject extraordinaire, which showed that plicatas were not limited to close-up appreciation, but could also be dramatic landscape subjects. A third factor of this decade was APRIL MELODY (Gibson '67). Prior tangerine-factor plicatas were few and generally unimpressive. With the advent and use of APRIL MELODY, a steady

stream of totally unique tangerine bearded innovations began to evolve.

A fourth progenitor of modern plicatas must be mentioned—PROGENITOR!—along with its Dykes Medalist offspring WHOLE CLOTH (Cook '58). The homely intermediate PROGENITOR, named by Paul Cook solely to simplify breeding discussions and records, and its fourth generation descendant WHOLE CLOTH are not plicatas, nor do they carry that genetic factor as far as is known, but they do carry the requisite gene to inhibit anthocyanin pigmentation in the standards with no (or only partial) inhibition in the falls. Since anthocyanin pigments are the stuff of which plic markings are made, this meant it was possible to breed for “bicolor plicatas”, irises with self-colored standards and plicata-patterned falls.

Of the 34 tall bearded plicatas receiving the Award of Merit since 1970, only five are not derived from ROCOCO, STEPPING OUT or APRIL MELODY: KILT LILT, SUMMER SUNSHINE, SHOWCASE, WILD JASMINE, LACED COTTON. Of the remaining 29, all but ODYSSEY are ROCOCO derivatives! Fourteen involve APRIL MELODY, nine involve STEPPING OUT, and sixteen are descendants of PROGENITOR.

Among these 34 winners is a good representation of what the plicata family now encompasses. There is LACED COTTON, a “minimalist” plicata so faintly marked as to be recognizable as a plicata only with difficulty. Bold, showy white ground plics like GOING MY WAY and TENNISON RIDGE; sharply-marked ones like solidly-banded MODERN CLASSIC and precision-stitched RARE TREAT, plus the likes of GENTLE RAIN and JESSE'S SONG with more graduated shadings of marks merging with the around color. Neglecta-plics like THEATRE and EVERYTHING PLUS, amoena-plics like SNOWBROOK. Yellow ground plics like SUMMER SUNSHINE and SHOWCASE, variegata-plics like WILD JASMINE, CARAMBA, and BROADWAY. Tangerine-toned variations from lightly marked ANON to deeper RANCHO ROSE and MISTRESS to heavily marked QUEEN IN CALICO and RASPBERRY FUDGE. Bicolored tangerine combinations like ACOMA, CAPRICIOUS, and GIGOLO.

Where to next? Recent introductions and seedlings-in-waiting soon to be introduced show an ever-increasing array of tangerine colors, some with deeper pink or orange grounds, and ever more shocking markings as exemplified by ABSTRACT ART, POWER SURGE and EPICENTER. ROCK STAR added in the horn factor. DAREDEVIL

shows tangerine beards in combination with blue markings. The tangerine beards themselves keep changing to brick, brown, sienna, chocolate, and other variations, adding to the interest. Meanwhile, more conventional white- and yellow-ground plicata lines become increasingly more ruffled or laced.

The long-overlooked luminatas are beginning to come into their own, as modernized versions make an appearance. FLIGHTS OF FANCY, SPIRIT WORLD, and MIND READER are three such innovations.

The “non-plicata” plicatas (well, if they can have alcohol-free beer, why not markings-free plicatas?) are also making a comeback. These “ice whites” and “lemon ices” with their inhibited, invisible markings, now come in several other colors and can be lumped together under the new term “glaciata”. Exhibiting a remarkable clarity of color, BURNING BRIGHT, GODDESS, CLASSMATE, and ANSWERED PRAYERS are some of these updated ices.

There were eight plicatas listed on the 1970 Popularity Poll of tall bearded irises; their number had increased to fourteen out of a hundred on the 1994 poll. We expect the number of popular plics to increase even more over the next twenty-five years.

OVER THE HORIZON

by Terry Aitken

My first population of seedlings back in 1976 produced some interesting variations. Oranges crossed with BRIDE'S HALO showed strange, brightly glittering gold rims. Another cross of CUP RACE X STEPPING OUT produced an array of plants which had strange, glittering silver rims. How I wish, now, that I had realized the potential for something really unique! We are now reassembling breeding stock for a twenty year project to produce gold and silver glitter in tall bearded irises.

Some ten years ago, Keith Keppel brought to my attention that LACED COTTON was really a plicata. Crossed with GOING MY WAY, we obtained lace texture seedlings with spots, a line of work that I refer to as “speckle plics”. I see much future potential for fully speckled tall bearded irises reinforced with lacy texture.

*Dykes Medal
Winner*



*Future
Directions*



SILVERADO
(Schreiner '87) DM'94



TB SEEDLING "A"



TB SEEDLING "C"



TB SEEDLING "B"

Medians



BROWN LASSO (BB)
(Buckles/Niswonger '75)
Knowlton Medal '80
Dykes Medal '81



PANDA (MTB)
(Dunderman '75) WW'80



BE DAZZLED (SDB)
(Boushay '75) AM'78



RARE EDITION (IB)
(Gatty '80) Sass'86

I expect to see enormous changes in all classes of medians. Even SDBs will resemble miniaturized versions of TBs with two or three branches. Tetraploid MTBs will explode with all the color variations of the other bearded types. Nearly all bearded irises will be “everblooming” in twenty-five years!

Among the beardless irises, I anticipate a strong shift to tetraploids in Pacific Coast Irises, coupled with outcrosses to related species to develop greater climate tolerance. Indeed, many iris species simply await the patient hybridizer who will take the time to convert them into “domestic” irises through tetraploidy.

Siberians, Japanese and Louisiana irises, already converted to tetraploids, will reach new dimensions in color intensity and diversity with greater durability and climate tolerance.

Each new step up the ladder of diversity simply increases the opportunity for more directions. Future hybridizers and gardeners alike, can look forward to “tailor made” iris to suit their needs.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF TALL BEARDED IRIS

by Bill Maryott

When reading various articles on the direction of bearded iris, one occasionally reads that most of the advancements have already happened and future changes will be marginal. After nearly twenty years of hybridizing and selling bearded iris, I believe this is entirely incorrect. I expect to see tremendous advancements in iris breeding which will far surpass what we've seen in the past.

The urbanization of our society and the fast-paced “have it now” ethic minimizes the number of individuals dedicated to serious iris breeding. Commercial growers and a few dedicated individuals, as well as the likely potential for scientific recombinant DNA in the not too distant future, will likely accelerate the improvements in iris. When I say “improvements”, I really mean “changes”. The major improvement that could be made would be disease resistance and environmental adaptability. DNA manipulation could be used to improve the growing capabilities but will more likely be used to make it more marketable, i.e., more unusual. *The AG Alert*, dated 9 November, 1994, page 27, has an article regarding three genes from unrelated plants that work

on totally separate types of diseases. The article goes on to state "Such broad resistance within a single family of genes signals that the genes will be easy to transfer into other plants. That means scientists could one day, with just a little genetic engineering, protect any plant from bacterial, viral and fungal infections, in one fell swoop." Imagine the potential of iris with no bacterial soft-rot or fungal leaf spot.

When I suggest there will be more changes in the iris during the next decade than previously, here are the changes I foresee. First is remontancy or tendency to "repeat bloom". No other characteristic will be as important and no other characteristic will be as commercially sought after. This pertains not only to mild climates but also severe climates. This interest has only become especially important in the last ten or fifteen years and is led by demand from the buying public.

The second major change I see coming is more emphasis on color breaks such as initially developed by Allan Esminger in Nebraska. To this point, they are still considered very much the *avant garde* and viewed with some disdain by the dyed in the wool irisarians, but I expect the buying public to create commercial demands such that truly attractive, vigorous, appealing color breaks will become commonplace and considered desirable. In addition to color breaks in flowers, we will see color breaks in modern cultivars with attractively streaked foliage in combinations of greens, blue-greens, grey-greens, purples (from the purple leaf base) and whites. These new cultivars, which are not yet available, will essentially obsolete varieties such as ZEBRA and ARGENTEA.

The third major development will be new patterns. There will be zonals, halos, luminatas, heavy veining, dark beards on light colored iris and white, yellow and tangerine beards on dark varieties. Pink, yellow, brown, orange and peach amoenas will also be popular. The "ices", "glaciata's", or "double recessive plics" from plicatas like GODDESS will be available in very deep yellows and very deep peach pinks. The luminatas will likely be as important and varied as plicatas are today.

Heavy ruffling and lace, as well as widely overlapping petals will be more pronounced in the SDB's and the IB's than in the tall. In tall bearded iris, the focus on large flower size will still be available and there will be some varieties with flowers nearly ten inches in diameter, but they will be the exception rather than the rule. Thinking back to GIANT ROSE, big flowers have been possible for 30 years or more but

would require staking and special care the general public is not willing to provide.

I don't envision horns, flounces and spoons to be much more important than today. Deep colors such as deep pink on the order of OVATION and PINK ROSE will be available and very popular. Metallic colors like PAGAN and THRILLER will be very popular. Very dark, early blooming true blacks with no purple influence will be commonplace. They will have giant flowers, intense ruffling, many buds, and some will sport bright showy yellow or tangerine beards.

The final and most important consideration which I think will be available within 10 or at most 20 years is genetically engineered iris cultivars using recombinant DNA. Cloning of cultivars will replace the standard propagation means very soon such that new cultivars will be available for mass marketing within less than five years from conception. The most exciting possibility would be to add a spectrum red gene which would provide red, hot pink, TROPICANA-like oranges, brilliant red maroons, etc. This gene coupled with a free blooming or "everblooming" characteristic would put the iris into an entirely different market segment. It would be grown widely for the cut flower trade, it would be forced into bloom with lights, and would be considerably more popular than today. The other factor that might make the iris significantly more important would be to create foliage that would stay green and attractive throughout the year to increase the irises potential as a landscape plant. This could be done perhaps through hybridizing or through genetic engineering

In the next twenty years, I would expect the likely center of breeding activity is likely to be the Pacific Northwest. The potential for significant and important commercial breeders in Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and perhaps South Africa is also likely. The information superhighway with the ability to transmit photo-quality images and breeding results instantaneously, on-line pedigrees via CD ROMs, iris conventions with participants from throughout the world, and the ability to ship small pieces of a cultivar in sterile agar to be replicated elsewhere makes breeding a world wide endeavor. For example, an interested breeder in an isolated part of Russia could create and distribute cultivars throughout the world. Photos of their creations and comments regarding their breeding approach could be communicated real time with other breeders in the world via something like the Internet communication system we now have.

All in all, I expect the future of iris breeding to remain very exciting.

Median Iris

LILLIPUTS TO MEDIANS

by Jim Morris

In a time frame not so long ago there began a movement. In 1953 Geddes Douglas, *AIS Bulletin* Editor, "took steps to bring together iris growers interested in small irises." And then, under the heading of a Lilliput Iris Club he sent a letter on July 8, 1954 to a list of 134 people he proposed to constitute the Charter Membership of what was first known as the Median Iris Club (1955) and then the Median Iris Society (1957).

Most members in those days before Interstate highways and the wide availability of television, relied on radio, newspapers, telephones and letter writing as their means of communication. In *AIS Round robins* were King. The grouping together by Mr. Douglas of assorted Robin members into an organization was indicative of wide spread interest in small irises, lilliputs, intermediates and table irises. This prompted him to editorialize "No longer can it be said that this is the American Tall Bearded Iris Society."

This new grouping of members called themselves the Median Iris Club, and promptly went to work studying, comparing notes and sharing pollen. Formal organization of the Median Iris Society took place in January 1957. It was said that the new name better dignified the seriousness of their intents and purposes. The first officers were: President, Earl Roberts, Indianapolis, IN; Vice-President, Edwin Rundlett, Staten Island, NY; Secretary, Mrs. Frank (Bee) Warburton, Westboro, MA; Treasurer, Mrs. Robert (Peggy) Grey, Crescent City, CA; Board of Directors: Jay Ackerman, Mrs.

Bert (Bonabeth) Bricknell, Geddes Douglas, Ben Hager, Mrs. C. (Helen) McCaughey, Dr. L. Fitz Randolph.

Heading the four general divisions comprising the Median Group were the following directors: Lilliput (SDB) Division, Bee Warburton, MA; Intermediate Division, Mrs. R. (Wilma) Greelee, IL; Table Iris (MTB) Division, Mrs. David (Alice) White, CA; Border Iris Division, Bonabeth Brickell, KS.

Single dues were set at \$1.00 and additional family dues were \$.50 per year. A newsletter, *News & Views*, was published in December 1957 and November 1958. (*News & Views* Number 2 became affectionately known as the "Confetti Newsletter" because Editor, Mrs. Brent (Nona) Mott, printed it on odds and ends of colored mimeo stock due to limited funds of the Society.) A yearbook, *The Median*, edited by Mrs. John (Molly) Price, was published in 1958 and 1959. The first yearbook was dedicated to Marion Walker, AIS President, for his support and counsel in the Median Iris Society's charter year of 1957.

With the sanction of the AIS Board of Directors, the Median Iris Society was first affiliated in April 1957 and then became the *first* official Section of AIS in May 1960. They were soon followed by The Society For Siberian Irises and the Spuria Iris Society. To this day Sections are listed on page one of the AIS Bulletin in the order in which they were chartered!

Conditions under which special interest groups could become an AIS Section were:

1. The American members of the society must be members of AIS.
2. Its bylaws must be approved by AIS.
3. Participation in the AIS registration and awards system is required.
4. Provision for publication of articles of general interest, exclusive of newsletters, may be arranged.

It is interesting to note that the Dwarf Iris Society did not become a Section of AIS until 1980.

The parent organization of AIS, acting on the advice of Dr. L. F. Randolph of Cornell University, and Dr. G. M. H. Lawrence of the Bailey Hortorium, made two important changes in January 1958. First was the adoption of an Horticultural Classification recognizing four basic types of Median irises; and second, the establishment of a series of awards for these four classes, giving to each a place of comparable importance with other recognized types of irises.

The median bearded irises, a diverse group, comprise all the

bearded irises that are, or have been considered to be intermediate in any sense between the dwarf and the tall bearded irises. They are the "intermediates" of the Royal Horticultural Society's classification, 10 to 28 inches. The present classification of the American Iris Society, which is the international registry for all irises except the bulbous, divides them into four horticultural types, Standard Dwarf, Intermediate, Miniature Tall and Border Irises.

Official height limits for the dwarfs and intermediates have been far from uniform. The AIS in 1933 rated all irises up to 17 inches as dwarf, then lowered it to 15 inches. The Royal Horticultural Society's top height for dwarfs is 9 inches. The AIS 1958 SDB height classification of 10 - 15 inches did not prove adequate for the pumila-tall hybrid range and so was changed by AIS in 1976 to the current more inclusive 8-15 inches (21-40 cm).

At the beginning MIS established Test Gardens in the East, Midwest, West and Northwest parts of the United States. Ben Hager took on "Operation Measurement", the task of measuring and verifying proper median classifications of existing varieties. The impending explosion of new median introductions by a host of hybridizers made this action critical to future registration standardization.

Joe Gatty conducted the first MIS Symposium (Median Popularity Poll) in 1958. Those early winners were BLUE ASTERISK (Greenlee '55) IB, PINK RUFFLES (K. Smith '40) BB, PEWEE (Williamson '34) MTB, and a tie in the SDBs between FAIRY FLAX (P. Cook '51) and GREEN SPOT (P. Cook '51). By way of comparison, the 1994 MIS Symposium winners were CHUBBY CHEEKS (P. Black '85), RARE EDITION (Gatty '80) IB, BUMBLEBEE DEELITE (Norrick '85) MTB, and PINK BUBBLES (Hager '80) BB. MIS members also vote for their favorite arilbred medians (a fact that is somewhat controversial to some) and the 1994 leader was JEWEL OF OMAR (Boswell '86) registered as AB (OB-) at 18 inches.

News & Views evolved first into the median *Newsletter* (1959) and then into *The Medianite* (1962), becoming a quarterly publication edited by Bee Warburton. The original Test Gardens fulfilled their initial functions and were later displaced by multiple Display Gardens numbering 113 at their peak in 1979, and stabilized at around 60 today.

The Median Iris Society provides special medals to the AIS for

awards in each median classification. Winners of the AIS Award of merit are eligible for the special medals voted by the judges of AIS. The Cook-Douglas Medal for standard dwarf bearded irises was first awarded in 1966. It honors Paul Cook and Geddes Douglas, two of the Society's most renowned hybridizers of SDBs. The Hans and Jacob Sass Medal is awarded annually to an intermediate bearded iris. It was also first awarded in 1966 and honors two of the most important breeders of IBs. The Knowlton Medal also began in 1966 for border bearded irises. It honors Harold Knowlton, former AIS President, who demonstrated vision in this BB class and hybridized many fine introductions. The Williamson-White Medal for miniature tall bearded irises achieved medal status in 1993. Parity was long overdue for the MTBs. This medal honors both E. B. Williamson (*and* his daughter Mary) as well as Alice White. It was from Mr. Williamson's seedling beds in the 1930s that Mary selected the first MTBs, or Table irises as they are also known. Mrs. White pioneered in the further development of the class, and is known not only for her own originations, but also for her untiring efforts in promoting the class.

Median irises are an important part of the genus both in the garden and on the show bench. With their vast array of fertile species and hybrids, there should be no shortage of new hybridizing ideas to be explored. What does the future hold for medians and the Median Iris Society? It may be impossible to predict but the possibilities are still extraordinary. There will continue to be new developments by current and future members and hybridizers. Past is prologue. Interesting theories and hybridizing plans have been talked about in recent issues of *The Medianite*. The recent stirrings of new interest in France, Russia and Eastern Europe offer new hope. AIS judging standards will be revised and improved with input from the Sections. Great care will need to be exercised by hybridizer and judge alike to ensure adherence to class. The watchword in medians must always be proportion, proportion and proportion.

The American Iris Society is a superior organization with a structure that uniquely allows its special interest groups, the Sections, to function separately and in concert with the parent. I am reminded of the words of William G. McGarvey in 1962, "The voluntary hobby society is a part of the genius of the democratic people." The future is bright!

HISTORICAL LISTING OF MIS PRESIDENTS

1. Earl Roberts	1957-1959	9. Harry Kuesel	1973-1976
2. Bee Warburton	1960-1961	10. Betty Wood	1976-1979
3. Jack Goett	1962-1965	11. Lee Eberhardt	1979-1982
4. Adelaide Peterson	1966-1967	12. Wilbert Sindt	1982-1985
5. Harry Kuesel	1968-1969	13. Jayne Ritchie	1985-1988
6. Lee Eberhardt	1970-1971	14. Carl Boswell	1988-1991
7. Carol Ramsey	1971-1972	15. Jim Morris	1991 -Present
8. Anthony Willott	1972-1973		

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Jim Morris is the current MIS President, and has been so since 1991.

MINIATURE TALL BEARDED IN REVIEW

by Jean Witt

An MTB attracted national attention at the Oklahoma City convention in 1988, where Norrick's little black and gold variegata, BUMBLEBEE DEELITE, carried off the Franklin Cook Cup. It went on to win the Williamson-White Medal which was activated in 1993, and in 1994 BUMBLEBEE DEELITE was runner up for the Dykes Medal. The 1994 Williamson-White Medal winner was the rose and white plicata ROSEMARY'S DREAM, from our most successful long-time breeder of MTBs, Mary Louise Dunderman. She also was awarded the AIS Hybridizer's Medal in 1993.

Though the number of introduced varieties is still small compared with other Median classes, MTBs continue to advance in both form and color range, and they are attracting an increasing number of breeders. Tangerine bearded pinks arrived in 1979 with Ben Hager's PUPPY LOVE, followed by his ABRIDGED VERSION in 1983. Recent seedlings from Jim Craig appear to have conquered the stiff-stem problem, and we look forward to their introduction soon.

MTBs are one of the few classes with both diploid and tetraploid varieties. Our biggest challenges for the future are to keep the slender, graceful stems and dainty flowers while extending the color range; to bring a slight ruffle and lilt to the petals without making them heavy; and to keep good growth characteristics and disease resistance from losing out as we select for these advances. For tetraploids, the chief objective is to produce small enough flowers on the proper, curving stems. For diploids the continuing aim is to come up with new colors and patterns, taking full advantage of the sporting propensity that HONORABLE and other antiques have bequeathed to us. The best proportions for a flowers 3 – 3½ inches wide remain at 20-21 inches, the mid point in our 16 – 25 inch height range.

Major MTB breeders of the 1970s—Earl Roberts, Walter Welch and Alta Brown—were succeeded in the 1980s by Ben Hager, Dorothy Guild, Jean Witt and Mary Louise Dunderman, our most successful originator of MTBs. In the 1990s Ken Fisher, Terry Varner, Jim Craig and Clarence Mahan have been working extensively for MTBs. Several other breeders have produced one or two introductions, and we hope some of them will take up MTB breeding in earnest. We need these newcomers to replace our older breeders who are closing out their programs.

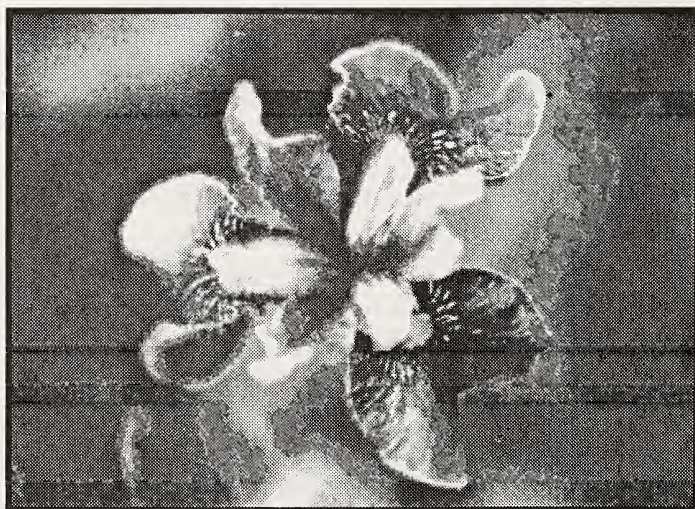
In addition to the varieties mentioned previously, a cross section of colorful and worthy MTBs from various breeders (in no particular order) include the following:

PANDA (Dunderman '75), medium blue with a white splash; CONCORD CAFE (Boswell '82), a tan/maroon plicata; DESERT SHIELD (T. Varner '90), rich yellow and dark velvety violet; FROSTED VELVET (Fisher '88), white and violet amoena; BILLIE THE BROWNIE (J. Burton '91), tan with a blue-violet flash; MANISSES (T.Varner '87), white and blue amoena plicata; ZULA (Fisher '89), cream and brown plicata; ORILLIA'S RING (Witt '91), yellow and white with brown plicata markings; ASTRA GIRL

(T.Varner '90), blue-white; REMINISCENCE (Mahan '92) lavender and violet bitone with a good lilt to the flowers; AACHEN ELF (Kennedy '84), yellow and lavender bicolor; DAPPLED PONY (Witt '81), heavily dotted blue on white plicata; WELCH'S REWARD (Welch-Hall '88), ruffled yellow/red; LIZETTE (Dunderman '87), orchid pink self; LITTLE JAZZ MAN (Guild '85), red with bronze beard; SUNSHINY (Craig '87), orange bearded yellow; CRYSTAL RUFFLES (Dunderman '86), white with orange beard; DISCO JEWEL (Guild '77) red and orange; CHICKEE (Dunderman '79), yellow; PAYOFF (Craig '89), white standards, tinted lavender purple falls.

The appearance of specialists' catalogs with long lists of MTBs makes it possible to compare varieties in a given color, or from a single breeder. Today's beginning hybridizer can build on existing lines and expect good results more quickly than in the past.

In addition to the *cengialtii-variegata-aphylla* derivatives which currently form the bulk of the introduced varieties, several new species such as *I. astrachanica*, and *I. purpureobractea* are being added to the MTB mix. John J. Taylor has been working to bring in *I. imbricata*, *I. timofejewil*, and *I. reichenbachii*, as well as a new infusion of *I. variegata*. The contributions of these species have barely begun, but the future looks exciting, and new, young AIS members will find MTBs a rewarding class with which to work.



JAYBIRD (Hager '82) SIB

Siberian Iris

YESTERDAY, TODAY, & TOMORROW

Compiled from several contributors

As a result of interest in Siberians, The Society for Siberian Irises was organized in 1960. Peg Edwards originally came up with the idea and, with the help of Bee Warburton, got things going. The Society serves to bring together persons who are interested in the culture and breeding of these irises and to provide communication among such persons; to encourage breeding and distribution of Siberians; and to promote broader interest in and involvement with the irises. The Society is now a section of the American Iris Society and has grown substantially to a current membership of over 800 .

The Society twice yearly publishes a journal, *The Siberian Iris*, which has evolved from a mimeographed newsletter in the early days into its current status as a slick publication with some color printing in each issue. There have also been published Checklists of Siberian iris registrations and introductions; and in 1981 the Society published a book format monograph, *Siberian Irises*, authored by Dr. Currier McEwen with the assistance of a committee of members. Currently a larger, hard-bound book is in press with publication expected in the near future.

The American Iris Society convention awards, determined by attendees voting their favorite irises seen at the convention, have almost invariably gone to tall bearded irises. The pattern was broken when a McGarvey Siberian, DEWFUL, won the Cook Cup as favorite iris originated outside the region of the convention, at Roanoke in 1974.

Twenty years later, at the 1994 Portland, Oregon, convention, Siberians won votes as never before. The Cook Cup winner was STRAWBERRY FAIR (Hollingworth '94) a beautiful, ruffled red-violet-pink; and second runner-up was LAKE KEUKA (Borglum '94), a very fine ruffled, flaring blue bitone. And in the President's Cup competition, second runner-up was Lorena Reid's DOTTED LINE, a 40-chromosome hybrid, lovely blue violet with a strikingly patterned signal area and falls. These awards show that irisarians like these flowers when they see them well grown.

In 1993 the Society for Siberian Irises held its first national convention. Meeting in Michigan with perfect weather conditions and peak bloom, those attending came not only from all parts of the U.S. but also from several foreign countries. More such conventions are being planned.

Modern Siberian irises are species selections or, much more likely, hybrids from among the eleven species (the exact number is in question) that comprise the series *Sibericae*. The two subseries of this series are commonly referred to as 28-chromosome plants and 40-chromosome plants. Those in the 28-chromosome group have been by far the most widely used in hybridizing and thus in the background of the great majority of commonly grown cultivars. The 40s, however, are now more frequently being used in breeding both in this country and in Europe. Intercrossing along the various 40-chromosome species and outcrossing to other series, most notably *Californicae*, are producing excellent results and promise much for the future.

Cultivars developed in the 28-chromosome group have until now all been derived from two species, *I. siberica* and *I. sanguinea*. Recently discovered, a third (presumed) species in this group, *I. typhifolia*, is only now being used in breeding; thus its value is yet to be determined. It seems likely, however, that this addition to the gene pool will have a significant impact on development of new garden hybrids.

Horticultural development of Siberian irises was slow, most 19th Century cultivars being selections from the species or chance hybrids from open-pollinated seed. One of these in particular, Barr's SNOW QUEEN, was very instrumental in stimulating interest in Siberians in the early 1900s. Not until 1924 was a variety registered whose parents were both known. This was the iris CAESAR,

Siberians



DOTTED LINE
Sino-Siberian (40 Chromosome)



Floral Arrangement
**LAVENDER STIPPLE &
ESTHER C.D.M.**



WHITE SWIRL
(Cassebeer '57) Morgan Award '62



BUTTER & SUGAR (McEwen '77)
Morgan Award '81, Morgan-White Medal '86



Top row, left to right: Kay Nelson-Keppel; Mrs. Marion Walker, Marion Walker
Bottom row, left to right: Kenneth M. Waite, Mrs. Waite; B.C. Baughen; Claire B



Arnold Stahly, Mrs. Stahly; Mrs. Leon Wolford.
Professor Sergio Orsi; James Rasmussen, Mrs. Rasmussen; and Ronald Mullin.

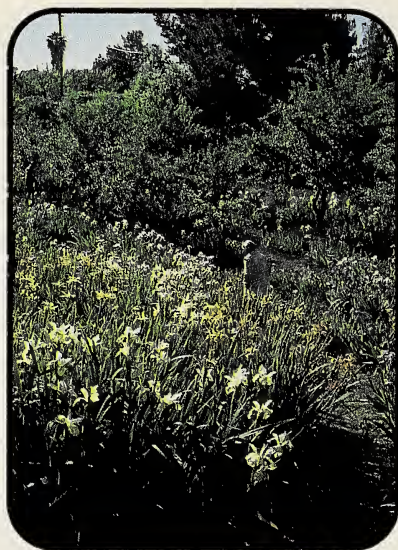


Top row, left to right: Kay Nelson-Keppel; Mrs. Marion Walker, Marion Walker; Harold Stahly, Mrs. Stahly; Mrs. Leon Wolford.
Bottom row, left to right: Kenneth M. Waite, Mrs. Waite; B.C. Baughen; Claire Barr; Professor Sergio Orsi; James Rasmussen, Mrs. Rasmussen; and Ronald Mullin.

Spurias



Convention Guest
Portland '94
3 year clump



SPURIA PLANTING
Dable Garden, '86 Convention



CINNAMON STICK
(Niswonger '83) HM'85



Cut Flowers

introduced by Cleveland Morgan, for whom the Morgan Award, until 1986 the highest award for Siberian irises only, was named. Morgan later introduced CAESAR'S BROTHER (1931), which is still widely grown and very significant both as a parent and as a Siberian which is extremely tolerant of climate and soil variations.

A highly significant development in the 28s came in 1957, when Fred Cassebeer introduced WHITE SWIRL. This iris added a dramatic new dimension in flower form, with its wide, round, flaring falls, a trait inherited by many of its descendents. The new form has been widely admired, although the older form is equally acceptable. A Morgan Award winner, WHITE SWIRL is certainly the most widely used parent in the history of Siberian iris breeding.

Dr. William McGarvey worked with the 28s for many years, beginning around 1950. He demonstrated conclusively that, contrary to popular opinion, most Siberians can be fertilized with their own pollen. Working toward the color pink, he developed PINK HAZE (registered '69), which quickly became the benchmark for pinkness in these irises. His TEMPER TANTRUM (registered '69) was then the premier exemplar of redness, though it contains a good dose of violet in its coloration.

Some fanciers feel that the greatest of Dr. McGarvey's breeding achievements was the wonderful white ESTHER CDM. A descendent of WHITE SWIRL, it is a superior iris—easy to establish, floriferous, its beautiful foliage firmly upright and good all summer, and its flower of beautiful form and grace. Its late bloom extends the season, and it is beginning to produce its own worthy descendents.

One other McGarvey development should be mentioned: SUPER EGO ('66). This iris begins to approach true blue, with the falls deeper color than the standards and style arms. It has proven to be an excellent parent, and along with other McGarvey irises, won the Morgan Award.

Another standout name in the history of Siberian iris development is that of Dr. Currier McEwen. He was the first to introduce tetraploid *28-chromosome* ($4n=56$) hybrids—the first being ORVILLE FAY and FOURFOLD WHITE introduced in 1970. He is also the breeder of the diploid RUFFLED VELVET—a deep reddish-purple of elegant form which has become a renowned progenitor and a Morgan Award winner.

Hybridizers including Dr. McEwen have used RUFFLED VELVET to produce outstanding seedlings of various colors. From RUFFLED VELVET X SHOWDOWN (Varner) Dr. Robert Hollingworth has produced three Morgan-Wood Medal winners (the highest award strictly for Siberians, since 1986) with LADY VANESSA, JEWELLED CROWN, and SULTAN'S RUBY (winning the medal in 1992, 1993, and 1994).

Dr. McEwen also developed the first *28-chromosome* of full yellow coloration—yellow falls and creamy white standards—BUTTER AND SUGAR, which also received the Morgan-Wood Medal.

Steve Varner has worked many years with the *28s*, his first introduction being TEALWOOD in 1960. This variety is a very deep blue-violet, still one of the darkest, and a completely reliable grower. In 1983 Varner introduced the excellent lavender pink DANCE BALLERINA DANCE, a tetraploid which went on to win the Morgan-Wood medal. KING OF KINGS, also a medal winner, is an outstanding white.

Bee Warburton brought out cultivars with distinctive patterning in shades of blue-violet. ATOLL ('75) has marbled color, and its child, PERCHERON ('82), has the colors veined and dappled. These and other Warburton originations have played prominently in the work of other hybridizers, most notably the team of Marty Schafer and Jan Sacks. Her REPRISE ('87) is one of the most reliable reblooming Siberians, sending up successive stalks just after the first bloom is finished.

Work with the *40-chromosome* species has been less active than that with the *28s*, presumably because the *40s* are much more demanding in their cultural requirements. They are not tolerant of soil alkalinity or of lack of water, and must have a cool root run. They do well, however, in the Pacific Northwest and some areas of the east coast. Much of England and some areas of continental Europe are to their liking as well as parts of Australia and New Zealand.

In this country some major work with the *40s* has been done by Jean Witt. Among her introductions are ECHO TW0, a very consistent rebloomer with good culture. LIGHTLY TOUCHED, (J. Peyrard by C. Hansen '92) creamy yellow with violet wash on hafts, is a Clarkei/Delavayi hybrid. Lorena Reid has produced IDSON, a

near black child of the McGarvey iris ID, derived from pure *I. chrysographes* breeding. Other of her introductions are ENBEE DEEAYCH, a deep purple, and DOTTED LINE, a patterned violet on white which was a recent runner-up for the President's Cup. Among her seedlings Lorena has developed some colors new to this group, including shades of apricot. Also working with the 40s, Carla Lankow has seedlings with candelabra branching and some of which are fragrant.

Most hybridizers working with the 40s have made crosses with irises of other series, primarily series *Californicae*. The resulting hybrids, dubbed Cal-Sibes, are sterile, but the first generation seedlings are in some cases quite finished flowers and excellent garden subjects. One example of this is Jean Witt's LYRIC LAUGHTER, an elegant yellow with darker yellow signal outlined by brown veins. Other examples are Leona Mahood's EL TIGRE and FAIR COLLEEN. Jean Witt is the leader in Cal-Sibe introductions.

It is interesting to note that a Cal-Sibe, MARGOT HOLMES (Perry '27), won the Dykes Medal in England in 1927. Dykes himself, along with Perry, worked with these crosses at that time, but not much more was done for many years. Recently Jennifer Hewitt has been working extensively in England with Siberians, both 28s and 40s, and with Cal-Sibes. Tomas Tamberg in Berlin also works with both sub series. He has achieved tetraploid Cal-Sibes (with some prospect of fertility) as well as tetraploid outcrosses to other iris series. Harry Foster in Wales was until his untimely death getting outstanding results in breeding the 28s.

In addition to the persons mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs there are of course many other hybridizers who have been and are active in working with Siberians. Added to those Morgan-Wood Medal winners already mentioned, others achieving the top award (the Morgan Award until 1986 when it became the Morgan-Wood Medal) are Frances Cleveland, Fred Whitney, Merton Gage, W. M. Kellogg, Peg Edwards, Ben Hager, Forrest McCord, Sidney DuBose, Harley Briscoe, and Calvin Helsley.

Among contemporary white Siberian irises are, of course, ESTHER CDM and KING OF KINGS, mentioned earlier. Added to these one might mention BELLISSIMA (Warburton '86) and SNOWY MOUNTAIN (Dale Johnson '88). Both have elegant form,

nice ruffling, and a definite green cast. There are also the beautifully ruffled HARPSWELL CHANTEUSE (McEwen '92) and SNOW PRINCE (Sarah Tiffney '90), a stately white of species form. ONG'S HAT is a warm white introduced by the late Ira Wood, who long championed the Siberian iris cause and whose name is memorialized in the Morgan-Wood Medal.

In the yellows BUTTER AND SUGAR has set the standard for depth of color. Hybridizers working to get more yellows have produced mostly pale yellow to cream colors. Among these are PAS-DE-DEUX (Hollingworth '88), GLOW OF HAPPINESS (Anna Mae Miller '94), and ISABELLE (Warburton '89), all out of BUTTER AND SUGAR. Another is MOON SILK (Hal Stahly '91) from other breeding, with two blue parents. Marlene Ahlburg, working in Germany with BUTTER AND SUGAR and related irises, has produced several with good yellow color, WELFENSCHATZ being probably the best. Several breeders, including the Hollingworths, have seedlings of full yellow color under evaluation.

Much work is being done to develop pure pink colors rather than the lilac or lavender tinted pinks currently available. Pure pink remains an elusive dream, but there are good irises coming from the attempts. In addition to DANCE BALLERINA DANCE Steve Varner has ILLINI DAME and MEMPHIS MEMORY. Working with McGarvey irises, Anna Mae Miller got a range of pinks in LILTING LAURA, CHEERY LYN, and FROSTED CRANBERRY. Jim Ennenga's HEATHERANN and Louise Bellagamba's MAGGIE LEE are in this category, and Bee Warburton's SILVER ROSE is an interesting and beautiful variation.

True red is another goal that eludes us. Current reds all have a good amount of violet in them and are wine red. Many of them, nevertheless, are very fine irises. Ben Hager has contributed CHILLED WINE and OMAR'S CUP. TEMPER TANTRUM (McGarvey) is vigorous and dependable. Bob and Judy Hollingworth have achieved outstanding success in this color class with the medal winners mentioned above; and now in another generation they have CORONATION ANTHEM and STRAWBERRY FAIR. One of the progenitors of these is the Varner red SHOWDOWN, and Steve also has DUTCH and DEMURE ILLINI.

Still in the reds, we have DEVIL'S DREAM, deep and velvety, and ROARING JELLY of raspberry red color from the hybridizing

and ROARING JELLY of raspberry red color from the hybridizing collaboration of Marty Schafer and Jan Sacks. Louise Bellagamba produced the medium red PRESIDENT TRUMAN. A very deep red-black is WINGS OF NIGHT (Calvin Helsley '92). MAD MAGENTA (Warburton '87) is a ruffled magenta with fringed and curled styles.

Purples that stand out are SHIRLEY POPE (McEwen), PIRATE PRINCE (Varner), and OVER IN GLORYLAND (Hollingworth). Near black-purple is Helsley's DRAMATIC PRELUDE. Blue shades in general have a violet component, but some are approaching true blue. Some excellent blue Siberians are BORBELETA (Julius Wadekemper) and DANCING NANOU (Miller), both deep blue in color. In a medium blue is a great new iris, LAKE KEUKA (Dana Borglum '94). Some lighter blues developed by Ken Waite are BEDFORD LASS, HARBOR MIST, and LAUGHING BROOK, all award winners and fine cultivars. And another deeper blue is MABEL CODAY (Helsley), a Morgan-Wood Medal winner. McEwen's DEAR DELIGHT approaches pure light blue, and he has seedlings even closer to true blue.

Patterned colors include those which are basically white with colored shading, stippling, wash, or veining. One of the most beautiful of these is SILVER ILLUSION (Dale Johnson '87), beautifully formed white with silver-violet blush. It has produced excellent seedlings in the Stahly garden and for Bob Bauer and John Coble at Ensata Gardens, as well as for others. White with light color overlay has also come from ESTHER CDM, producing MESA PEARL (Bauer-Coble '94), SPRINKLES (Bauer-Coble '94), and LAVENDER STIPPLES (Miller '91). And the heavily lined SHAKER'S PRAYER (Carol Warner '90) has been very well liked.

Hybridizers continue working for clearer and more nearly true colors, as in the case of red, pink, and blue. Although progress seems slow, the goals are believed to be attainable. As well as working for colors nearer to true, new colors are also being actively sought. Many cultivars have distinctly green signals and veins and green selfs or amoenas seem possible. Orange is another signal color that might be extended to the entire flower, and brown seems a possibility. Near black flowers are now turning up in the 28s, as they have for some time in the 40s, and as mentioned earlier, apricot colored seedlings are now a reality in Lorena Reid's garden. With

an increasing number of breeders of Siberian irises, we can expect more rapid expansion of the color range.

Color patterns are also changing as breeders widen the possibilities. Signals of contrasting color range from none to very large, extending far out on the falls. Enlarging the signal to form banded and plicata-like patterns, developing more contrasty signals, getting the signal color to become the color of the entire flower, and modifying the shape of the signal (e.g. into the butterfly pattern) are all hybridizing goals that seem possible of achievement. Also possible are pattern variations such as white splashed on blue, or darker lining, stippling, brushing, and dotting on lighter background colors. Breeders are working toward all these patterns, some of which we have now in small degree.

There are amoenas and near amoenas in the yellows and pinks. Work is being done to get pure white standards combined with falls of all colors, thus having true amoenas in blue, red, etc. Style arms are also receiving attention. Efforts have been successful in developing wider styles, with curls and fringes, in contrasting colors, and with varying postures relative to standards and falls. This breeding will lead to modification of both flower form and color pattern.

Extending the bloom period continues to be a purpose in breeding. One path to this goal lies in developing earlier and later blooming varieties. Already achieved to some extent, more needs to be done. Longer bloom also can come from increased number of buds per stalk. In the 28s and some of the 40s a reasonable goal is a stalk with three buds in the terminal placement and two buds in each of two side branches, with bud opening being more sequential than concurrent. Less branching may be desirable in plants of dwarf stature.

A third way to increase the bloom period is with repeat or extended flowering. Remontancy in the Siberians does not ordinarily occur in late summer or fall, as in the bearded irises, but rather new blooms come immediately or relatively soon after the first bloom flush ends. Such bloom is now seen with some regularity, but in most cultivars is far from dependable. A highly desirable feature, it is an important objective of current breeders.

As to flower form, some hybridizers are working toward wider and more flaring falls and heavier ruffling. As these characteristics

develop, however, it is important to remember that no one prescribed form is best and that various forms, so long as they are attractive, are equally desirable.

Some hybridizing objectives in the *40-chromosome* group are important to their reaching a wider audience. Efforts are being made to develop greater tolerance to diverse soil and climate conditions. Increased winter hardiness is needed, especially in the Cal-Sibes. And greater strength is needed where plants have large flowers on tall stalks.

In both *28s* and *40s* there is a quest for fragrance, a trait largely lacking. Vigor and disease resistance will always be important to breeders. Good proportion is a continuing goal, attempting to keep flower size in good relationship to stalk height. Gracefulness and charm, so characteristic of the Siberian species, must be maintained. Stalks should be upright, and neither stalk nor foliage should sprawl. Foliage should maintain good appearance all summer.

Greater height variability is needed. Especially desirable would be dwarf plants with flower height from, say, 10 to 20 inches and flower size in proportion. Foliage, of course, must be shortened in equal proportion, allowing the flower to be displayed. Steve Varner and Currier McEwen, perhaps others, have now developed plants of this size. More are needed.

The value of tetraploidy is questioned by some and thoroughly endorsed by others. There are some objections to the perceived stiffness of tets; on the other hand, they have achieved a disproportionately higher number of awards (among the *28s*) than have the diploids in recent years. Little has been done with tetraploidy in the *40s*, although as mentioned above, Tamberg in Germany is working with it. It seems safe to say that both diploid and tetraploid Siberians will be actively worked in the foreseeable future.

Enthusiasm for Siberian irises seems higher now than ever before. The future indeed looks bright.

This article should not be attributed to a single author. Those persons who contributed to its contents are Carla Lankow, Currier McEwen, Anna Mae Miller, Lorena Reid, Harold Stahly, D. Steve Varner, and Jean Witt.

Spuria Iris

SPURIA IRISES—INTRODUCTION

by Tom Abrego

The Spuria Iris Society was founded in 1952 in Houston TX to promote Spuria iris, maintain a test garden and to sponsor research. During the 1950's the Society maintained a well known test garden in Houston and funded research on Spuria genetics at Texas A & M University. Its early membership was international, but in fact was predominantly from the Houston area. Marion Walker of Ventura CA, Tom Craig of Escondido CA, Walker Ferguson, also of Escondido CA and Dr. Philip Corliss of Somerton AZ were exciting enthusiasts across the country with their fast paced advances in Spuria hybridizing. The 1956 American Iris Society Convention in Los Angeles featured several well known gardens displaying Spurias: Marion Walker's, Clarke Cosgrove's and Tom Craig's. An optional pre-convention side trip to the Yuma area featured Dr. Corliss' garden. 1956 was also the year the first Nies Award was given, to Wadi Zem Zem (Milliken 1943).

As interest in Spuria iris was rapidly growing, the Spuria Iris Society, under the leadership of Mrs. Ila Nunn, made two important decisions. First, it was felt that leadership within the Society had to reflect a wider geographic scope than Houston. Secondly, the Society wanted to upgrade its relationship with the American Iris Society. The Spuria Iris Society held its first annual meeting in conjunction with the American Iris Society at the AIS 1959 National Convention in Oklahoma City, with President Ben Hager of Modesto CA presiding.

The Society published its first Checklist of Spuria Iris in 1963. Membership levels rose to new highs of about 300. Marion Walker, Dr. Philip Corliss and Walker Ferguson continued with their well received hybridizing efforts, joined by Eleanor McCown of Holtville CA and Ben Hager, now of Stockton CA. In spite of all this hybridizing activity, only a handful of new Spurias were introduced each year. This prevented the Spuria Society from enjoying an upgraded award status when the AIS revised their awards system. Nies Award winners ELIXIR (Hager '64), DAWN CANDLE (Ferguson '65) and HIGHLINE LAVENDER (McCown '68) are representative of the excellent hybrids from the 1960's. A highpoint perhaps was the AIS National Convention, "Golden Gate in '68". It's been often noted that one can attend a number of AIS National conventions without ever seeing a Spuria. This was not the case in 1968! Many of the tour gardens had lovely displays of Spurias, but a visit to Melrose Gardens was a special treat for Spuria lovers.

Marion Walker, Eleanor McCown and Ben Hager continued their Spuria breeding into the 1970's, joined by newcomers Bryce Williamson of Campbell CA, Bernice Roe of San Jose CA, Dave Niswonger of Cape Girardeau MO and Joe Ghio of Santa Cruz, CA. Nies Award winners PROVERB (Ferguson '71), ILA CRAWFORD (Hager '76) and IMPERIAL GOLD (McCown '78) are still considered very good iris today. Membership levels continued to rise, to over 400. A new Checklist was printed in 1973 and the Society's network of display gardens was expanding. The AIS held its 1975 National Convention in San Diego, visiting *Cordon Bleu Farms* and the Ed and Archie Owen garden.

Two AIS National Conventions in the 1980s featured gardens of Spuria hybridizers. The 1986 gathering in San Jose visited *Melrose Gardens* and the gardens of Bryce Williamson and Joe Ghio. The 1987 Convention in Phoenix featured Don and Bobbie Shepard's garden as well as Floyd Wickenkamp's garden in Sun City. Spurias were grown in most of the tour gardens at both of these conventions. A high point was SON OF SON (Wickenkamp '83) winning the President's Cup in Phoenix. Yet despite all this exposure, membership levels dropped to around 250. Hager, McCown, Niswonger and Ghio continued with their breeding programs, joined by Floyd Wickenkamp, Glenn Corlew of Walnut Creek CA and Charles Jenkins of Salinas CA. Nies Award winners BETTY

COOPER (McCown '82), DESTINATION (Hager '84) and CINNAMON STICK (Niswonger '83) demonstrated the promise of Spuria breeding. The Spuria Iris Society finally reached its much sought after parity in the AIS awards system by elevation of the Nies Award to medal status and the creation of Awards of Merit for Spurias. A new Spuria iris Checklist was published in 1985.

The Spuria Iris Society of 1995 is very much like the Spuria Iris Society of 1955. We are still dedicated to the promotion of Spuria Iris, we maintain a directory of display and commercial gardens, and we are publishing a new Checklist this year. The challenge of our future is three fold: we need to increase our membership; increase exposure to Spurias at AIS events; and to encourage new hybridizers. Our ability to meet these challenges will determine the future of our Society. The promise of the future? Our iris speak for themselves; the new hybrids are exquisitely refined and easy to grow.

SPURIA IRISES, TODAY & TOMORROW

by Dave Niswonger

At the present time, the blooms of Spurias are well known for their ability to last at least three days in the garden and on the show bench. Thus many florists have learned that they make a good cut flower for arrangements. The plants are recognized as good accent plants for the landscape. Hybridizers have developed many new colors and color combinations of bitones and bicolors.

Regarding spurias as cut flowers, while I visited Barry Blyth in Australia, he had a request from a nearby florist for as many cut flowers as Barry could provide. We cut over six hundred stems, before they opened but with color showing in the bud and transported them to the florist dry. They were unloaded into canisters, filled with water and then stored in the florist's cooler.

Another experience involved a request I received for 15,000 spurias! Turned out the lady wanted seed, not plants, and no yellows. I had some seed labeled and stored, so was able to send about 4,000. The seed was being mailed to Iran for growing cut flowers for shipment to Europe. Thus the request for no yellows, since *I. xanthospuria* (commonly called

“Turkey Yellow”) and *I. crocea* (formerly called *I. aurea*) are readily available in that area.

In the future, hybridizers will be looking for new colors and color combinations. Other trends involve further exploration of the species, developing a shorter plant (a border iris, if you will), blues that won't fade, and a true pink.

Some headway has already been made in these areas. Eleanor McCown introduced HIGHLINE SNOWFLAKE ('91) and SPANISH LIME ('91) using a seedling from Bill Gunther's *I. halophila* crossed with her own RUFFLED CANARY and PIECES OF EIGHT (which has *I. maritima* and RUFFLED CANARY in it). These two ruffled whites and a lime yellow grow about two feet tall and have the small flowers in proportion to the plant. Ben Hager's MARITIMA GEM ('90) is a cobalt violet about twenty inches tall with proportionately small flowers. It is a cross of CLARKE COSGROVE (Hager '74) and *I. maritima*. Note that the species have been used to reduce the size of the plant. Hybridizing without using species occasionally produces small plants which can be further bred to reduce size, such as Barry Blyth's CHESTNUT CHIME ('89), a small ruffled chocolate brown with no signal.

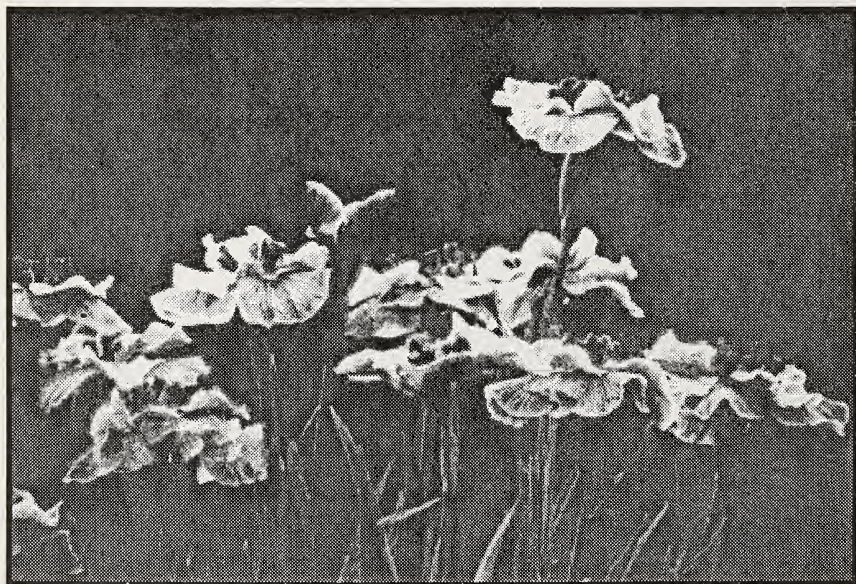
There are some beautiful wide blues of many shades in the spurias, but they all tend to fade in the hot sun. Preliminary results incorporating *I. demetrii* in the genetic mix with blues seem to indicate this may be a possible solution. The problem with this approach is that *I. demetrii* has 38 chromosomes and when crossed with most of the blues (which have 40 chromosomes) we get an odd number of chromosomes causing infertility. However, *I. maritima* also has 38 chromosomes and second and third generations have been obtained from crossing with it. Ben Hager is of the opinion that if you make enough crosses, a sport may occur producing seeds with an even number of chromosomes, which will then be fertile. It has been my experience that first generation hybrids from the species tend to favor the species in the flower form and further generations are necessary to produce a more contemporary flower form.

Advancements have been made by utilizing species. However, there may be species as yet undiscovered, or new avenues to explore in the known ones. Taxonomists cannot seem to agree as to how many species we have. Some want to separate them into several species; others want to list a few with many subspecies. As a hybridizer, I would consider them different species until results of hybridizing prove otherwise. It may appear that two subspecies belong to the same species, but they may act differently when crossed with other species or hybrids. For example, I used BLUE LASSIE with *I. klattii* both ways and got RUSSIAN

BLUE ('82) and RUSSIAN WHITE ('82), resulting in notable hybrid vigor. (The plants grew about a foot taller than named varieties, the leaves were about twice as wide and they bloomed about one week earlier than the other hybrids.) Some taxonomists say that *I. klattii* is the same as *I. musulmanica*, but the seedlings I grew from *I. musulmanica* didn't have the hybrid vigor of those crossed with *I. klattii*. While both of these species have 44 chromosomes, seedlings from *I. musulmanica* appear to be more fertile than those from *I. klattii*.

As far back as 1967, Walker Ferguson felt that a pink spuria was possible. That was the year he introduced FIREPLACE, seedlings from which had hints of pink. This was followed by PINK CANDLES ('69) and LA SENDA ('72), which he thought were advancements toward a pink spuria. Eleanor McCown's HIGHLINE CORAL ('86) is a great advancement toward a pink. It came from RIPE WHEAT crossed with a seedling which was then crossed with HIGHLINE AMETHYST, (out of FIREPLACE). Some of my recent seedlings with a strong tint of pink come from FIREPLACE background also.

One thing I would like to say on this 75th Anniversary: "We need more hybridizers working with the spurias". Aren't the possibilities obvious? But, if you don't have the space to grow seedlings, just grow and enjoy spurias and pat the hybridizers on the back when you get a chance. We are so blessed to live in a world full of irises!



Japanese iris basking in sunshine. Photo by T. Aitken.

Japanese



TUPTIM
(L. Rich '74) Payne Award '78



LIGHT AT DAWN
(Marx '57)



Colonel Knight Garden



McEwen Garden on tour

Remontants



FRANKINCENSE
(M. Byers '89)
Rebloom SDB



Rebloom IB seedling
(CHAMPAGNE ELEGANCE
x JOE COOL)



Rebloom TB
MOTHER EARTH
(Hager '88)



Rebloom TB
BLAZING SUNRISE
(P. Black '85) HM'88

Japanese Iris

THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

by John Coble

SJI was accepted as a Section of The American Iris Society in 1962. It was first published as a Section of AIS in the January 1963 *Bulletin*. The 60 Charter Members had founded a society to “foster the culture, appreciation, breeding and distribution of Japanese irises and hybrids involving these irises”. The “Purposes” of the founding members has succeeded in that today, SJI has 550 members, more than half a dozen annual Japanese iris shows across the country, annual JI conventions, numerous hybridizers, and an excellent publication *The Review*, which has come from 12 mimeographed pages to 54 pages with a four color cover. There have been a lot of exciting, growing accomplishments over the past 31 years by numerous members that upheld Section 2 of the Bylaws by “promoting a spirit of cooperation and good fellowship among its members”.

The energy that brought about the formation of SJI and its acceptance by AIS was the interest in Japanese iris and fellowship that developed between Bee Warburton, Eleanor Westmeyer, Arlie Payne, Bob Swarengen, Bill Ouweneel, and Art Hazzard. They developed an extensive exchange of letters, ideas, and plants and a most fortunate exchange of letters and plants with Shuichi Hirao in Japan. From their neighbors and friends in local iris societies, their energy and excitement and willingness to help and share became infectious. Through their writings in various *Robins*, many AIS members became aware of their sincere interests. They soon brought their knowledge and experience to an eager audience at the section meetings at AIS national conventions

and through their many articles on culture and cultivars in the pages of *The Review*.

The Society drew up and submitted new judging standards for Japanese iris, both show bench and garden judging. At the same time it convinced AIS to delay the due date (July 1) for the Japanese iris section of the judges ballot until August 15, to afford judges the opportunity to evaluate Japanese iris throughout their full bloom season, especially in the Northeast, where the JI bloom season just begins about July 1!

The 1965 fall *Review* listed eleven gardens or nurseries that were selling Japanese iris. The foremost was Walter Marx Gardens of Boring, Oregon, with its full color ads in magazines such as *Horticulture* and color catalog that introduced thousands of gardeners to Japanese iris. Today, the SJI source list contains 36 names; several now publish color photos in their catalogs and advertise nationally. SJI has organized a list of 63 gardeners raising JI that welcome visitors to their SJI Display Gardens.

Among the list of Charter members of 1964 were the four most influential hybridizers of the era, and their introductions are still the backbone of Japanese iris plantings today. W. A. Payne of Terre Haute, Indiana, started hybridizing in 1932 and between 1950 and 1969 introduced 170 cultivars from his tens of thousands of seedlings. His iris are still regarded as the most influential work on hybridizing modern JI in the U.S. Walter Marx of Boring, Oregon, introduced about 120 cultivars between 1950 and 1970. Arthur Hazzard of Kalamazoo, Michigan, introduced 88 cultivars between 1962 and 1982. Shuichi Hirao of Zushi, Japan, was the leading hybridizer in Japan with many introductions. He exchanged both plants and volumes of letters with many members of the Society. He introduced to SJI the many different cultural methods of growing JI in Japan, including pot culture and bonsai. Until his death in 1988, he remained the primary contact between SJI and The Japan Iris Society. He was host to Mr. Payne in 1967 for six weeks in Japan during the bloom season. He also was president of The Japan Iris Society that organized and hosted two tours of AIS members to Japan in 1984 and 1985 for the JI bloom season.

In 1967, SJI established an "award" status for the equivalent of the Award of Merit by AIS. The AIS Board and SJI Board agreed that it should be called the W. A. Payne Award, for SJI's foremost and senior hybridizer. Mr. Payne donated the silver cup that became the W. A.

Payne Award. With the new AIS awards system creating a “medal” status, the Payne Award silver cup has been retired to the new AIS Library by SJI. SJI produced a new W. A. Payne Medal in 1993 to be given to the recipient each year. The new Medal is a 5" x 7" crystal “ice berg” with a sandblasted Japanese iris, mounted on a walnut block with a silver plate listing the iris name, hybridizer, and year of the award.

The list of Payne Award winners yields a number of influential hybridizers since its inception in 1966 and we have a growing list of accomplished and beginner hybridizers today. With primarily the Payne, Marx, and Hirao introductions, today’s hybridizers are working on different color patterns and combinations, increased branching for higher bud count, expanded blooming season, and increased vigor of plants for greater adaptability to various garden and climatic conditions. Progress is being made on all fronts. Better “pinks” are being achieved with greater substance, repeat bloom has been achieved in at least the temperate coastal climates, and stable tetraploids have been achieved and hybridizing is now being attempted with tetraploid *pseudacorus* for a future of color and patterns that we can now only imagine. These hybridizing advancements and increased knowledge of genetic inheritance are shared with members in articles published in *The Review*.

At the suggestion of Art Hazzard, the Southwestern Michigan Iris Society held the first Japanese Iris Show in the U.S., July 6, 1963. 1964 saw two shows: Kalamazoo, Michigan and Davenport, Iowa. Today, one of the greatest exposures of JI and SJI to the public is through the (currently about seven) Japanese iris shows held annually across the country. These iris shows are popular, as they amaze the public with a flower that they have not seen before.

Recently, SJI has been sponsoring annual Japanese iris conventions. The Southwestern Michigan Iris Society held the first “Japanese Iris Weekend” in 1985 with garden tours and guest iris plantings. One hundred JI enthusiasts attended and asked “when and where can we do this again?” “Again”, became 1987 in Summerville, South Carolina, and SJI has held annual conventions ever since. The word of “good times and lots of Japanese iris blooms” spread until Portland, Maine, had over 200 in attendance for the 1990 SJI Convention. The conventions continue to be a success with the cooperation of hybridizers sending their new introductions and promising seedlings to evaluate, with host societies that unselfishly donate hours of gardening labor and planning,

and with our increasing membership that has a growing interest in Japanese iris. SJI has worked from the beginning to collect and put together all of the information it could find on Japanese iris that have been registered and introduced and the numerous plants brought into commerce from Japan that have not been registered. SJI has, over the years, published several cumulative check lists of Japanese irises; the most recent issue being *The 1992 Cumulative Check List of Japanese Irises*. In 1990, SJI sponsored a project to research the background and documentation of numerous unregistered Japanese iris imports that were in commerce, some had accumulated various spellings of names and differing descriptions. Clarence Mahan heroically tackled this job with great appreciation from SJI and Japanese iris growers everywhere. His first task was to convince AIS to allow the registration of these previously introduced iris from Japan (some originating from the 1800's); so as to afford the iris growing community an authoritative reference for their name and description. Over the past five years, Clarence has researched many historic letters and catalogs and communicated with leading Japanese hybridizers and historians to confirm iris names, hybridizers, and correct descriptions. His work has culminated with the registration of over 150 cultivars in the name and sponsorship of SJI. As of January 1995, SJI has a policy which strongly recommends that supplier are now to sell only registered irises, and buyers are to consider with suspect all unregistered Japanese iris.

Another important project of SJI was to sponsor the publication of a book on Japanese iris. Authorized in 1985, Currier McEwen agreed to edit the first definitive book in English on Japanese iris. After Currier spent five years of research and editing contributions by U.S. and Japanese growers and hybridizers, SJI published the 224 page hardcover book in 1990. *The Japanese Iris* incorporates the history, cultivation, and hybridizing of Japanese iris in Japan and the U.S. It includes 32 color plates, and is an inspiration to all iris enthusiasts.

With increasing interest in JI and a constant search for more information on existing cultivars by beginners, SJI recognized the need for additional educational information, preferably in color. In 1993-94 it published two sets of color postcards that were designed to be collected in photo albums to augment the Checklist, or used as postcards to help promote Japanese iris. The first set of 16 postcards feature introductions by W. A. Payne. The second set of 18 postcards feature Payne Award winners. These educational and promotional sets are sold

by SJI through their Slides/Librarian Chairman.

From the beginning of SJI, there has been a constant increase in the interest of slide shows on Japanese iris by local clubs. This has been maintained as one of the most important educational tools of the Society. SJI has been fortunate to inherit the extensive slide collections of W. A. Payne, Adolph Vogt, Arthur Hazzard, and Leland Welsh. And its slide programs are kept up to date with donations of recent introductions by current hybridizers. The SJI slide sets are available from its chairman.

The biannual publication of SJI, *The Review*, is the major forum of communication between SJI and its members and subscribers. It remains as the primary source of educational, cultural, and hybridizing information on Japanese iris. We are fortunate to have always had dedicated and conscientious editors: Bee Warburton and Eleanor Westmeyer merged their talents (1963-66) to set the high standards that THE REVIEW has maintained, Bill Ouweneel sustained the goal for 18 years (1967-1984), Lee Welsh expanded and improved the publication for the next 8 years, and Evelyn White, our current editor, has initiated the new color cover and modern format of the now 50+ page publication. The 31 Volumes of *The Review* contain a wealth of information on history, hybridizers, culture, genetics, cultivar and garden reviews. An excellent aide in searching for information, the "Comprehensive Index of *The Review*, (Vols. 1 – 25)", was published in the 25th anniversary issue of *The Review* (Vol. 26, No. 1) by Leland Welsh. All back issues of *The Review* are available from the SJI Librarian.

Another promotion of SJI (in each Spring *Review*) is to urge each member to participate in the annual JI popularity poll. The most popular cultivar is now published on the color cover of the Spring *Review* (the Payne Medal winner appears on the Fall issue). The Poll results are published in each Fall issue and have become excellent lists from which beginners and novices can review "popular" JI cultivars. Virginia Burton, Publicity Chairman, continues to direct this popular and educational activity for SJI.

The Society for Japanese Irises is pleased to be a Section of The American Iris Society on this 75th Anniversary. And we confidently expect to grow larger and stronger and maintain our interest and activities around our favorite iris as we move toward our 50th and then on to *our* 75th anniversary.

Reblooming Iris

MILESTONES OF REMONTANCY

by John Weiler

Most irisarians are surprised to find that interest in reblooming irises is more than a recent development. Indeed, the first records of remontants were detailed four hundred years ago in Gerarde's Herbal where he described *I. biflora* and *I. violacea*, wild plants that could bloom more than once a year. Since that time certain reblooming clones of more than two dozen species have been identified. Although noted, the reblooming trait was apparently not exploited for gardening until nearly three hundred years after Gerarde's writings.

The first deliberate selection of remontancy in irises for the garden came in England in the late nineteenth century when Thomas Ware introduced the cultivar, GRACCHUS (1884) a selection of *I. variegata* which occasionally rebloomed in autumn. This was followed by a Barr and Sons introduction of CRIMSON KING (1893), an intermediate bearded iris which reblooms in autumn. In the twentieth century, Charles Andre of France introduced two remontant dwarf irises, JEAN SIRET and LIEUTENANT DE CHAVAGNAC (1926).

Here in the United States, the pioneers in developing reblooming irises were the Sass brothers, Hans and Jacob, working on their farm near Omaha, Nebraska. Since their interest included all classes of bearded irises, it is not surprising that they introduced rebloomers in several types. Their earliest remontant introduction was the tall bearded cultivar, AUTUMN KING (1924), a blue-violet,

followed over a twenty year period by other reblooming tall bearded cultivars ranging in color from lavender to red, yellow plicata and tangerine bearded pinks. In the middle 1930s they produced dwarf remontants. At the same time they developed several reblooming intermediates which, unfortunately, were not fertile to continue that line of breeding. These intermediates did, however, become quite popular and some are still grown in gardens today. Particularly vigorous and dependable are ELEANOR ROOSEVELT ('33) a deep violet with blue-violet beards and SANGREAL ('35) a muted yellow of intense fragrance. Of these early Sass rebloomers, perhaps the most significant to further development was the tall bearded plicata line which is found in many modern remontant plicatas.

During the period of 1930-1950 many other hybridizers produced some rebloomers. Prominent among these names are Tom Craig, Lloyd Austin and Jim Gibson of California, H. E. Weed, Oregon, and G. Percy Brown, Massachusetts. Brown's FALL PRIMROSE is still occasionally listed as a dependable remontant and his releases often succeeded in reblooming in many parts of the U.S. since they were selected in an area of short growing season and severe winters. Jim Gibson released the cultivar, GIBSON GIRL, a successful remontant over the U.S. from hardiness zones 5 southward. It was developed directly from the Sass plicata, TIFFANY. GIBSON GIRL has figured prominently in much of Gibson's work with the remontant trait disappearing for a generation or two only to resurface in later generations and in seedling patches of other breeders including today's prominent hybridizers Keith Keppel, Sterling Innerst, and Lloyd Zurbrigg. This iris probably marked the beginning of the modern era in developing reblooming irises.

Two hybridizers in particular began serious work to improve remontants in Raymond G. Smith of Indiana and Lloyd Zurbrigg, then from Canada selected existing cultivars to use in producing improvements. In both cases, several of the Sass rebloomers were selected. In both cases the cultivars, AUTUMN FLAME and the descendent from the Sass line of plicatas, GIBSON GIRL, were amongst those selected. Both hybridizers have continued to work on perfecting these irises and have demonstrated constant improvement in flower form, clarity of color, better branching, greater plant vigor and dependable rebloom over large areas of the

U.S. Amongst Raymond Smith's earlier releases that have beautiful form, superb branching and color clarity are SUMMER OLYMPICS, a light creamy yellow and RETURNING GLORY, a coral pink. A number of his recent introductions show great improvement in flower form and width but have yet to be widely tested for remontancy. Lloyd Zurbrigg has also produced many cultivars that have performed very well through most of the country. Those well tested for remontancy are the tall bearded varieties, IMMORTALITY, a white flowered plant which had rebloomed well from hardiness zone 5 southward with several records of rebloom in zone 4 and even a couple reports of rebloom in zone 3; EARL OF ESSEX, a blue-violet on white plicata with rather short stature but a superbly formed and ruffled flower dependable for rebloom from zone 5 southward and for producing even more beautiful offspring which rebloom; and one standard dwarf, BABY BLESSED, a light yellow often reblooming repeatedly during summer and autumn. Lloyd also has many beautiful cultivars in yellow, blue-violet zonal, neglecta-plicata, white and other colors not yet widely tested for remontancy.

As more hybridizers became involved, the iris growing public became more aware of rebloom and this led to the formation of The Reblooming Iris Society in 1962 with its publication, *The Reblooming Iris Reporter*, now renamed *The Reblooming Iris Recorder*. Sectional status as an affiliate of AIS was granted in 1967. This, in turn, has enormously stimulated growth in subscriptions to the *Recorder* increasing from about 200 to a current 1200 during the past six or seven years.

The expanded membership and recent publicity for reblooming irises in nationally circulated garden magazines has had other beneficial effects than to stimulate public interest. Many more hybridizers are becoming involved to produce improved clones with dependable rebloom. Earl Hall in Ohio has produced the tall bearded cultivars, QUEEN DOROTHY, a violet on white plicata, PINK ATTRACTION and the huge, soft yellow, MATRIX as well as the standard dwarfs, JEWEL BABY, a blue-black and LITTLE SHOWOFF, icy blue white with darker blue beards. Sterling Innerst has produced COLORWATCH, a brownish burgundy on white plicata. Paul Black released the unique pinkish-orange amoena, BLAZING SUNRISE. Walter Moores has released the tall bearded

varieties DIME SPOT and GOLD REPRISÉ, both deep yellow as well as the superb border bearded, MISS SCARLET, a burgundy red. Bennett Jones produced the deepest orange remontant to date, ORANGE HARVEST. Ben Hager has released the tall bearded cultivars, FEED BACK, a blue violet, BONUS MAMA, a broad white that has produced outstanding offspring and a host of newer flowers of exceptional quality yet to be widely tested for rebloom. Monty Byers was just getting started at producing a tremendous number of improvements in all classes of bearded iris when he died in 1992. His tall bearded BUCKWHEAT, a medium yellow, HIGH HO SILVER, white, and DUKE OF EARL, violet on white plicata are only a small sampling of those performing well over wide areas. His standard dwarf, FRANKINCENSE, a yellow and burgundy variegata is very popular. Dave Niswonger has released the award winning cultivars HONEY GLAZED, an intermediate, and tall bearded CHAMPAGNE ELEGANCE, neither of which were registered as remontants but both of which have rebloomed over much of the U.S. John Weiler began by working on standard dwarf remontants and has released many cultivars over a wide color range. Most popular and dependable of these so far have been PLUM WINE, plum-red-violet, and THRICE BLESSED, bright yellow. More recent work has included tall bearded cultivars. Terry Aitken has produced STELLAR LIGHTS. Other hybridizers of name now involved are Joe Ghio, Keith Keppel, Bill Maryott and recently, the Schreiners and Rick Ernst of Cooley Gardens. Other beginning hybridizers are also turning their attentions to reblooming irises and may be expected to help accelerate interest and development.

What about the future? While all iris cultivars produced in the U.S and cited in this article have been reported repeatedly to rebloom from hardiness zone 5 southward, a few of them rebloom repeatedly during summer and autumn. This is true of the tall bearded cultivars IMMORTALITY and FEED BACK as well as the standard dwarf, BABY BLESSED. IMMORTALITY has rebloomed even in zone 3. This trend of more frequent rebloom and in northern parts of the country with short growing seasons will continue so that we will eventually have irises blooming nearly continuously whenever the ground isn't frozen. Furthermore, several clones of beardless irises are now identified which bloom more than once a year. These are mostly among the Japanese and Siberian types but

also include Louisianas, an *I. setosa* cultivar, an *I. pseudacorus* cultivar and even the Spuria group. Work has also begun on producing remontant arilbred irises. We look confidently forward to the day when the major thrust of AIS will be toward remontancy in all groups of irises.

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Dwarf Iris

A WINDOW TO THE LITTLE ONES

by Erik Tankesley-Clarke

In 1856, Augustino Todaro, a botanist in Palermo, Sicily, described a small iris, *Atroviolacea*. Though this was the first known description of the plant, it was widely distributed much earlier. American pioneers carried it with them, decorating dooryards and cemeteries with it profusely. It therefore held a place not only of beauty but of sentimentality for many, gardeners and non-gardeners alike. Witness this quote from Mrs. Raymond Craig, an early contributor to the Dwarf Iris Society's publications:

There is a very old, old Cemetary (sic) here [in Iowa], and there are deep tracks which the old timers say were made by the Mormons as they passed through here with their covered wagons... And in this same Cemetary where the Mormon trail still shows, my mother would lead me to a small grave of a baby, covered now to this day with a great mat of a tiny dear little purple-blue-red iris, always telling me that it was a child of some of those covered wagons families. That little early iris still survives.

Walter Welch hazarded the guess that *Atroviolacea* (the name means "blackish violet") was the most widely grown variety of any iris in the world. While that claim could certainly be challenged, the example of that little iris excited the imaginations of many generations of iris lovers. To this day, it is the first—and sometimes only—dwarf iris that many people know.

It is impossible to mention the beginnings of the Dwarf Iris Society without mentioning Walter Welch. The state of Indiana is the cradle of the Dwarf Iris Society of America, Inc. The society was formed in 1950, and Walter Welch of Middlebury was a leading

light there for many years. Virtually alongside him worked Paul Cook, who showed the way for imbuing the entire bearded race with qualities uniquely available from the dwarf irises. Earl Roberts imported and distributed many species. Later other Indiana breeders took up the baton: Helen Doriot, Bonnie Dunbar, Harry Hite, Emma Hobbs, Clarence Jonas, and Ed Zickler produced many varieties which hold sway over us even today. For instance, an unregistered seedling of Zickler's, his "Pink Maker," is found behind virtually every pink miniature and standard dwarf and most pink intermediates. Even yet, Indiana retains its brilliance in the dwarf firmament in the person of Lynda Miller.

Why should the Hoosier state prove so central to the history and continuing evolution of the dwarf irises? It is a matter partly of chance, but also of climate. Chance, in that a number of inquisitive—and *acquisitive*—persons discovered the enormous potential and diversity in these tiny plants. Climate, in that the premier dwarf iris of them all, *I. pumila*, at least in the unselected forms first available, required the cold, snow-covered winters of the northern part of the country. With the chill yet insulating blanket such as Indiana winters could provide, these tiny plants would prosper and flower. This is not to say that dwarfs flourished only here. Among the first Americans to grow dwarfs were Samuel Burchfield of Michigan. Other Michiganers included Lillian Bierrnan, Tena Berndt, Fern Robinson, and Frank Williams. On the other side of the Lakes, Minnesota saw the introduction of perhaps the first true *I. pumila* to be grown in this country, when Robert Schreiner imported seed from Transylvania and Russia, giving rise to the famous troika of Carpathia, Sulina, and Nana. A generation or so later, Minnesota produced another dwarf hybridizer, David Sindt, the foremost breeder of *I. pumila* hybrids of his time (even though he did most of his work later in Illinois). Wilma Greenlee worked in Illinois, too. The Plains states have added their share to the circle of dwarf breeders. Jim and Lucy Fry maintained a formidable collection in Kansas and Mildred Brizendine oversaw an involved program of hybridizing over many years. Cleo Palmer proved that warmer Oklahoma could grow miniatures. The Sass brothers, never content to leave a flower in peace, worked with such dwarfs as were then available to produce some of the earliest reblooming irises. Hazel Grapes and Lucille Kavan came along later to bring dwarfs from

the Nebraska soil. Tony and Dorothy Willott continue work in Ohio, and all growers of species, dwarfs and otherwise, owe a debt to Fitz and Fannie Randolph, who worked in New York, but who collected over much of Europe.

But all has not been in the middle or eastern parts of the country. Much excellent work was done, is done, in Oregon and Washington. Bennett Jones made original *pumila*-tall crosses whose bloodlines infuse much dwarf breeding still. It is George Shoop's original drawing of a plant of *I. pumila* which evolved into the logo later adopted by the Dwarf Iris Society. Leona Mahood, Walter Marx, and Alta Brown were names to be reckoned with in the 1950's and 60's. Terry Aitken continues to keep the Northwest in the eye of the dwarf world. Reaching inland, Eva Smith, Wilma Vallette, and John Taylor showed that Idaho and Montana could compete in the dwarf arena. And further south, Ben Hager, another never to pass a blossom by, began stretching the limits of the dwarfs climatically and chromosomatically, demonstrating at last that they need not be limited to the northern half of the country and establishing formidable lines of fertile, 40-chromosome breeding families of true dwarfs. Melba Hamblen, breeder of many highly refined tall, captured top dwarf awards more than once.

The preceding was no attempt to address all American breeders who have been active in the dwarf field, and hybridizers from other countries haven't been mentioned at all. But the list makes the point. What is it about these diminutive blossoms that has drawn the attention of such a diverse group of tweezer-wielders over all this time? It is hazardous to second-guess such a collection of minds, but perhaps it was the challenge and the possibilities that drew them. For all the variety we now have in the large irises, it originated from a relatively small collection of species. Certainly the genetic combinations are far from exhausted in the tall— even yet we see new patterns and colors emerging—but in the dwarfs—there was even more. Whereas the tall were basically either 48- or 24-chromosomes in the beginning, we find dwarfs in both of those counts, as well as 16- and 32-chromosome complements. New avenues of fertility presented themselves. A whole new field lay fallow, waiting to be turned over by the inquiring minds of these hybridizers.

No species was more important in this effort than *I. pumila*. Its

tetraploidy provided at once wide variation within the species and enormous potential by crossing it with the giant tall bearded, to give an entirely new race of irises. The resulting standard dwarfs, crossed back to either of the original parents, eventually led to spreading the influence of the lilliputian species into virtually every size of iris available today. So we find that it has probably affected the appearance of modern bearded irises more than any innovation since tetraploidy invaded the big irises in the early part of this century.

Even though *I. pumila* epitomizes the dwarfs, we shouldn't neglect others. For instance, modern tall bearded irises owe a great deal to *I. balkana*, sometimes referred to the species *I. reichenbachii*. This small, oddly-shaped flower hides within its cells the gene for bicolor (the dominant amoena, or I_s , gene). Through Whole Cloth, this dwarf species led to major advances in tall bearded breeding. Attempts to bring the dominant amoena pattern into dwarfs leads, full circle, back to *I. pumila*, where the two tetraploid species join forces to help produce yet new sorts of irises not otherwise possible.

Many of the early dwarfs that were so important in the development of the group are no longer extant or are exceedingly rare. At least two of the aforementioned Schreiner pumilas still exist, but sources for *I. pumila* in general have dramatically declined in the last decade. Another very important clone is Cretica. This unique form of *I. pumila* gave rise, through mechanisms not fully understood and still disputed, to the first plicatas in dwarfs. Most plicatas in the dwarfs and even the intermediates still owe their existence to this one small Iris. Paul Cook's seedling 1546, with parentage generally given as ((AZUREA x *I. pumila*) x *I. pumila*), was used extensively by breeders of both miniature and standard dwarfs.

Miniature dwarfs have come a long way from these beginnings. Virtually every color and form of the larger irises is either present or fast approaching in the dwarfs. Rebloom has crept into them in recent years. For anyone acquainted with them, it soon becomes obvious that every garden which can grow bearded irises will accommodate—no, *welcome*—the miniature dwarfs, and no serious iris collector can claim the title without at least a few handsome specimens. Let the Dwarf Iris Society help you to enjoy them a little bit more.

Pacific Coast Iris

THE PACIFIC COAST IRIS, AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

by Lewis Lawyer

The history of the Pacific Coast iris is relatively short, dating back to about 1825 when David Douglas collected seed of *Iris tenax* and of the species later known as *Iris douglasiana*. Although plants were grown and were described in English and European publications, no serious breeding work is documented on either species until the time of Dykes, almost a hundred years later.

William R. Dykes, horticulturalist and plant breeder, was the first person on record to assign a name to a clone of a Pacific Coast Iris. His IOTA, which he selected from a cross of *I. purdyi* X *I. tenax*, was given an AM award by the Royal Horticultural Society in 1914. That same year, his DOUGLASIANA ALPHA was illustrated in *The Gardeners Chronicle* in London. Dykes, however, is also the one who first called them the "California" iris, a name later Latinized to *Californicae*. This was long before Joe Ghio coined the more appropriate term, "Pacifica".

Concurrent with Dykes, Amos Perry, owner of the 25 acre nursery, *Perry's Hardy Plant Farm* at Enfield, Middlesex, became interested in iris. Perry's interest in the Californians was directed toward inter-species and inter-series crosses, 13 of which were introduced between 1923 and 1938. His inter-series cross, MARGOT HOLMES, introduced in 1927, was awarded the English Dykes Medal that same year.

Between 1948 and 1958, about the time that US breeders were getting into the act, H. Senior Fothergill of London, named and introduced 14 PCI clones from inter-species crosses between *I. innominata* and *I. douglasiana*. According to notes from Roy Davidson, however, Edith English of Seattle, Washington, was the first person to record crosses of *I. innominata* X *I. douglasiana*. Although none of them were ever officially registered with AIS, these crosses were made in 1936, ten or twelve years ahead of Fothergill. They were reported in *National Horticultural Magazine* in 1948, under the name *Iris aureonymphaea*. Her GOLDEN NYMPH, unregistered, is a selection from one of these crosses.

Her contemporaries include DeForest, Hardy, and Starker of Oregon. Fred DeForest was the first irisarian in the United States to name and register clones originating from documented crosses. Carl Starker is most famous for his AGNES JAMES, a collected *I. douglasiana* clone which he registered in 1939. The most famous iris originating from this trio, however, is VALLEY BANNER, registered by Ruth Hardy of Eugene, Oregon, in 1958. Because of its distinctive pattern, Valley Banner, a collected natural hybrid between *Iris tenax* and *Iris chrysophylla*, has probably been the subject of more PCI articles than any other single cultivar.

From the mid 1940's through the early 1970's, most of the named PCI crosses were introduced by Southern California hybridizers, Nies, Walker, Lenz, and Luhrsen. In 1943, Eric Nies of Hollywood, introduced ORCHID SPRITE, parentage unknown, which was awarded an AM in 1948, the first PCI to be so honored. In 1947, he registered AMIGUITA, a selected *Iris douglasiana* which is still grown throughout California. AMIGUITA was the recipient of the Mitchell Award in 1974, the second cultivar so honored. It is also second to PACIFIC MOON as the cultivar most often used by other hybridizers in their breeding.

Marion Walker of Ventura, President of AIS from 1956 - 1960, introduced OJAI and VIOLET ELF in 1959. OJAI, a seedling from AMIGUITA, became the winner of the first Mitchell Award in 1973,

Between 1949 and 1983, Dr. Lee W. Lenz, then Director of the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont, introduced over 25 named cultivars. Included among these are some spectacular hybrids involving *Iris munzii* in their parentage: ALMAABELL, CLAREMONT BLUEJAY, CLAREMONT BLUEBIRD, and SIERRA SAPPHIRE.

Dwarf Iris



GOLD CANARY
(Willott '81) AM'87



I. reichenbachii
(balkana)



Atroviolacea



◀ SPARKLING EYES
(Welch '54) Caparne '56

*Pacific
Coast
Iris*



Wild Pacific Coast Iris
on Monument Peak



LATIN BLOOD
(Ghio '87)



LOS LOMAS
(Ghio '90)



UP ALL NIGHT
(Ghio '88)



SIERRA BUTTERFLIES
(Lawyer '84)

SIERRA SAPPHIRE, a pure *I. munzii* selection, became the fifth recipient of the Mitchell Award in 1977.

Richard Luhrsen of Inglewood introduced many named selections and crosses between 1953 and 1957. Of these, AMI ROYALE, another AMIGUITA child which he never even bothered to register, still survives.

Next, in chronological order, is Marjorie Brummitt, England's most prolific PCI hybridizer. Between 1955 and 1982, she introduced 32 named cultivars, mostly under the prefix name: "BANBURY - ", the town in which the Brummitts resided, BANBURY GNOME, BANBURY PRINCESS, etc. Her NO NAME was awarded the English Dykes Medal in 1976, the only PCI ever so honored.

The fifth Southern California hybridizer, and a great promoter of the PCI, was George Stambach of Pasadena who introduced eleven named cultivars between 1962 and 1978. At least two of his introductions still survive, WESTERN QUEEN, introduced in 1972 and GARDEN DELIGHT, introduced in 1975. WESTERN QUEEN was the fourth winner of the Mitchell Award in 1976.

In 1972, Jack McCaskill, of the Los Angeles County Arboretum in Arcadia, introduced CHIMES and FAIRY CHIMES through his father's *McCaskill Nursery* in Pasadena. Both of these pure white beauties are still favorites, and both perform well.

August Phillips was not a serious breeder, but, like George Stambach, he was an ardent champion of the PCI. SUSIE KNAPP, introduced in 1970, and NATIVE WARRIOR, a near red introduced a year later, are both offspring of AMIGUITA. NATIVE WARRIOR became the third Mitchell Award winner in 1975.

Roy Davidson of Seattle is well known for his species selections and crosses. His LEMONADE SPRINGS and MOONLAD are excellent examples of dwarf rock-garden types .

In 1974, Dara Emery, of the *Santa Barbara Botanic Garden*, introduced the 1978 Mitchell Award winner, CANYON SNOW, a chance seedling of *Iris douglasiana* with nearly pure white flowers. CANYON SNOW was voted the favorite PCI cultivar in a recent SPCNI survey, and is by far the most widely grown cultivar, and is popular with landscape designers and home gardeners alike.

In 1970, Joe Ghio, of Santa Cruz, took over where the Southern California hybridizers left off. Starting in 1970 with the introduction of PASATIEMPO, he has become the most prolific and innovative hybridizer in the history of the Pacific Coast irises, with over 185

superb cultivars to his credit. They have been the recipients of eleven Mitchell Awards, two of the recently-established Mitchell Medals, and have been incorporated in the breeding programs of almost every present-day PCI hybridizer.

Ben Hager is hybridizing and selecting in his hot summer garden in Stockton. PACIFIC MOON, which he introduced in 1974, has the distinction of being used by more hybridizers in their breeding than any other cultivar.

Other hybridizers have contributed to the ever growing list of PCI cultivars, and, in a recent SPCNI survey of most popular cultivars, those of Terry Aitken, Lois Belardi, Robert Hubley, Charles Jenkins, Bennett Jones, the Lawyers, Duane Meek, Colin Rigby, Robert Ward, and Vernon Wood were mentioned. Vernon Wood's MIMSEY became the final winner of the Mitchell Award in 1992 and the first of the new Mitchell Medal in 1993.

Jean Witt of Seattle, Lorena Reid of Springfield, and Tomas Tamherg of Germany, are prominent in the field of inter-series breeding. Two Australian irisarians, Fred Danks and D. Hargrave, have contributed much to the gene banks of other hybridizers, and Berry Blyth has named and registered several cultivars, but they are difficult to find outside of Australia.

It is a credit to all Pacifica hybridizers, from the past to the present, that so many types of flowers ranging from the narrow-petaled species types to wide-petaled, ruffled blooms are available to us. There is a style to meet the taste of all who garden.

PACIFIC COAST IRISES TODAY

by Gigi Hall

This article is intended to be a discussion of present day Pacific Coast Irises (PCI), both hybrid and species. However, it is difficult to speak of today without an occasional glance at how we got here and what tomorrow might bring. If I occasionally digress from the present, I apologize in advance.

The article is organized into three sections: some overall notes on the PCI as a class, a brief section recognizing current hybridizers and a final section providing varietal comment.

Notes on the Class as a Whole

The present is an exciting time in the development of the Pacific Coast Iris (PCI) hybrids. Advanced generation hybrids have extended the color range available, the color patterns available and the distribution of common colors or patterns over the entire height range of the PCI. *I. munzii* hybrids, with their unique, true-blue color, have been produced which are as easy to grow as the more common hybrids derived primarily from *I. douglasiana* and *Iris innominata*. The plicata pattern is now firmly established in the PCI. Hybridizers are producing approaches to pink and orange. Tall yellows are a reality (early hybrids with the golden-yellow of *Iris innominata* also exhibited its small stature). There are diminutive purples and reds, and hybridizers are working on petite blues (early hybrids with the blue of *Iris munzii* usually exhibited *Iris munzii* type large flowers, tall, broad foliage, tall branched bloom stalks and sparse growth habit). Colors are becoming clearer, cleaner and more intense. Signals and eye spots have become more clearly and attractively defined or minimized or eliminated. Overall striping and veining, formerly restricted to red-violet over a golden-yellow base, has been extended to additional colors of the spectrum.

As with most irises, the latest hybrids usually have flowers with a wider, fuller form, ruffles and better substance. Ten years ago, the typical hybrid produced flowers that lasted two days. Today, hybrids with blooms which last four days are common, and some still retain good form and color into the fifth day. Petals with enough substance to withstand rain and wind are the norm.

There is renewed interest in the species as well. The annual expeditions sponsored by the Society for Pacific Coast Native Irises (SPCNI) have exposed many of our members to the species in their native habitat. Seed has been collected at many of the sites visited by these expeditions and is available to SPCNI members at a nominal charge - thus making the species accessible to all those brave enough to germinate the seed and line out the seedlings. A second reason for interest in the species is the desire to incorporate the cold hardiness of deciduous species *Iris tenax* and the hot summer tolerance of *Iris macrosiphon* and *Iris munzii* into the gene pool.

Despite all the advancements, there is still room for improvement in the areas of foliage that remains neat and attractive

in appearance the whole year, adaptation to a wider range of climatic conditions, and better transplant tolerance.

Room for More Hybridizers

If I define an active hybridizer as someone who has introduced at least two cultivars in a particular class of Iris over the three years 1991, 1992 and 1993, we have only nine active hybridizers of the PCI: Lois Belardi of Santa Cruz, California, Heather Collins of Winchester, New Zealand, Joe Ghio of Santa Cruz, California, B. Charles Jenkins of Scottsdale, Arizona, John D Marchant of Walnut Creek, California, Colin Rigby of Rochester, Washington, Nora Scopes of New Barnet, England, Vernon Wood of Pinole, California and E.D. Zimmerly of Turner, Oregon. If we include hybridizers working with CALSIBs (the result of crosses of PCI with forty chromosome Siberian irises and vice versa) we add Lorena Reid of Silverton, Oregon and Dr. Tomas Tamberg of Berlin, Germany to the list. There are lovely PCIs by at least a dozen other hybridizers introduced within the last ten years, but this still makes for a select and small group of people. There is room for many more people working with and introducing Pacific Coast irises.

Painting the Rainbow

This section is devoted to varietal comment. Recommended selfs or near selfs - brown, black, blue-violet, purple, red, golden and yellow, blue, orchid or lavender, white and pink—are described first, followed by commentary on plicatas and fancies, the striped tigers, varieties with a pronounced signal or blaze, and bitones or bicolors. I have limited the discussion to named, introduced varieties, brought into commerce from 1984 through 1994.

PAJARO DUNES (Ghio '85) in shades of tan is one of the most dependable browns, blooming freely year after year and transplanting easily. OHLONE (Ghio '90), named for a California Indian tribe, is vibrant in blended rust and wine with a violet signal area. Stalks have one or two branches in addition to the terminal placement. SAN FELIPE (Ghio '90) is a diminutive variety with russet colored flowers veined deeper, a hairline yellow edge and violet halo signal. CUP OF TEA (Ghio '88) is an aptly named ocher self.

NIGHT EDITOR (Ghio '87) is a purple-black bitone. It is establishing itself as a classic because it is easy to transplant and seems to be more hardy (winter freeze tolerant) than most PCIs. STROKE OF MIDNIGHT (Ghio '89) is a large flowered, velvety red-black. It increases more slowly than NIGHT EDITOR or its pollen parent DEEPENING SHADOWS (Ghio '85), a dependable deep purple bitone. UP ALL NIGHT (Ghio '88) is another red-black that produces consistent show stalks. SAN ANDREAS (Ghio '91) is a velvety purple that consistently repeat blooms in my Fremont, California garden. The first bloom is in late January or early February. The second bloom is during the normal PCI bloom season, in early April here.

SAN GREGORIO (Ghio '85) forms large, brick-red flowers on relatively short bloom stalks. Clumps are neat and tidy year round and sets the standard for overall garden performance in reds. MISSION SANTA CLARA (Ghio '93) has wide form and deep crimson-maroon-red color with a hairline edge of buff-yellow on the falls.

EL NINO (Ghio '92) has rounded flowers of heavy substance and an unique butterscotch-apricot color. Both the flower and the overall clump are dainty and petite. This is a show bench flower as well as a good garden iris.

MIMSEY (V. Wood '88) is a creamy yellow with faint veining around the signal area on the falls. A vigorous grower and reliable performer, it earned first the Sydney B. Mitchell Award and then the Sydney B. Mitchell Medal—a feat never to be repeated. BIG MONEY (Ghio '84) is vigorous, easy to transplant and a reliable bloomer. IN THE MONEY (Ghio '88) has deep, saturated, golden-yellow flower color and bubble ruffled form. PALO ALTO (D. Meek '85) is a lightly ruffled, sunny yellow with taller stalks and larger flowers than most other golden-yellow cultivars.

SIERRA DELL (L. Lawyer '88) is the closest to true blue. It blooms consistently in the 24 to 30 inch height range. The stalks on established clumps have two or three branches. Growth habit is somewhat range and open—typical of hybrids with a high percentage of *I. munzii* blood. CHIEF SEQUOIA (Weiler '90) has large blooms of lavender-blue. Standards are upright. Falls are strongly arched, somewhat pointed and have showy circular white signals. Bred in Fresno, California, it should do well in other hot-summer areas.

Deeper blues worth growing include AGE OF CHIVALRY (Ghio '92), an intense blue-violet self, DEEP BLUE SEA (Ghio '92) a royal blue with white ray pattern around the signals and MIRAMAR (Ghio '85) a large flowered, mid-blue-violet with blue-white signal patches.

TIA MARIA (D. Meek '87) could be considered either lavender or a bitone; the falls are slightly deeper in color than the standards. This variety has lovely ruffled and rounded form. VALET (Ghio '92) is a floriferous, petite favorite. The color is a smoky, moody mauve-orchid. CANYON ORCHID (D. Denney '85) has a large flower in milky lavender with light, brownish purple lines around the white signal patch. It is a dependable grower and transplants well.

Not many whites come on the market in the PCIs. TIDY WHITE (Hager '88) is a good grower and a prolific bloomer. It is a true white self with a small yellow signal. Since it was hybridized in the hot Central Valley of California, I suspect it will also do well in hot-summer climates.

The pinkest of current introductions is PINK CUPID (V. Wood '92). Color of the surface of the petals is a soft rose-tan-pink. Reverse of the falls is apricot. So far, it seems to be a very good grower.

PACIFIC RIM (B. Jones '91) has white standards and the falls are white with a neat mid-blue plicata rim. This is an excellent garden plant, producing multiple bloom stalks on first year clumps, increasing nicely and blooming heavily thereafter. WISHING (Ghio '93) exhibits in an entirely different pattern. Both standards and falls are white heavily lined and dotted blue-violet.

CALIFANCY (Hager '88) has a golden yellow ground, veined mauve purple. WILDER THAN EVER (Ghio '93) has flowers of bold red-violet veined and stippled over white. It quickly forms strong, neat garden clumps. WESTERLIES (Ghio '92) has rounded flowers of oyster white overlaid with blue-violet-gray veins and signal rays. IDYLWILD (Ghio '88) has rounded, ruffled flowers of white washed and veined blue-violet and edged white. The flowers set a new standard for compact, full form in the PCIs. WILDMAN (Ghio '88) is a lusty performer in golden-yellow with a heavy overall veining of brown.

LOS CALIFORNIO (Ghio '89) is a glowing purple with a golden sunburst signal pattern, and is a strong grower. DRIVE YOU WILD (Ghio '86) has bright red-violet flowers with a splashy golden ray

signal. NAPA VALLEY (Ghio '86) is another one of the petite PCIs in a striking grape purple with clean white sunburst signal area.

SKYLASH (Belardi '94) is a bubble ruffled white with a medium blue eyelash around each small yellow signal. MASCARA BRUSH (Marchant '90) has moderate sized, creamy yellow, lightly ruffled flowers with a striking, royal purple eyelash on each fall.

The flowers of BLACKLIGHT (Marchant '90) exhibit an intriguing color combination. Standards are smoky orchid. Falls are a deep garnet red with a blue-black spot in the center of each. SOLID CITIZEN (Ghio '87), a very cool, two-toned blue-violet with lighter standards and darker falls, is a solid performer both on the show bench and in the garden. For warmth try RARE REWARD (Ghio '89) sporting rosy-orchid standards, deep red-violet falls, and a black signal or EARTHQUAKE (Ghio '91) with russet standards, bright golden-yellow style arms and red-maroon falls with a light gold rim. It is a strong grower and transplants well.

FORT POINT (V.Wood '87) is a true bicolor with white standards and falls that are white with an overall blue-violet speckling and infusion.

THE FUTURE OF PCN

by Joseph Ghio

The Crystal Ball is hazy since the technologies are advancing so rapidly that it is very difficult to visualize what the future holds.

Certainly, through conventional Pacifica hybridizing, we can see the future from trends already established. Colors will become bright and clearer, with pink, relatively bright red, and rare blue flowers available. Multi-colored flowers with an array of "rainbow blendings", wild signals, and a variety of veined patterns will be created. The stems will become ever more sturdy, and branched, even candelabra-branched! The plants and foliage will be starchy and long growing, so the blooms can be held well above the leaves.

An increase in adaptability to climates outside the Pacific Coast will only be accomplished if people outside this range do serious breeding to adapt the *Californicae* to other environments.

Of course, resistance to cold, to hot and humid climates, and many other wished-for characteristics may be achievable if, as is likely to occur, genetic engineering becomes more sophisticated and costs reduced to the extent that even minor species, like the Pacific Coast native iris, can be tinkered with. If this occurs, then it will be a relatively easy matter to introduce hardiness and any other of several traits into this series, (or any other series or genus). The question of diploid versus tetraploid would be moot.

The possibilities of genetic alteration are endless. Series blendings are logical and easy to visualize, but I can also see the blending of genus, creating designer flowers! I can't imagine what the value of, say, irises blended with roses would be, but can well imagine the beauty of an orchid/iris blend. This "blended" dream might well be beyond the 25 year time span; but with the present speed of technological advances, who knows?



I. Tenax. Photo by Joanne Derr.

Species Iris

SPECIES IRIS GROUP OF NORTH AMERICA (SIGNA)

It was back around the year 1953 when a group of AIS members, who had a common interest in species iris, starting corresponding by robin. By 1966 this group led by Species Robin Chairman Roy Davidson had grown to eight robins with 75 participants. Over the next two years plans were made to form a Species Study Group under the wing of the AIS Scientific Committee. The robins provided sufficient material for editor Bruce Richardson to publish the first Newsletter for this new study group of 87 members in 1968. Bruce suggested the title SIGNA (Species Iris Group of North America) as a suitable name as it meant signal in Latin and it was intended to send out a signal far and wide. It also referred to the signal patch on many iris falls.

The *SIGNA Newsletter* was going to be (and still is) the vital link binding the group together, since geography kept the members far apart. The Species Robins were full of timely and interesting iris information. It was felt that this information should be shared and placed in a permanent form where it could be referred to at will. The publication was to be limited to information on species iris and the first or second generation crosses only, and that hybridizing was not the object, but rather the preservation of the wild species however possible.

In November 1967, six months before the first SIGNA publication, Ruth Hardy put together the first Species Seed Exchange. This was an idea that fitted well with the aims of the group to spread knowledge of iris species by growing them. The first seedlist had gone to whomever among the AIS membership

had asked for it, and 871 packets of seed had been sent to 80 subscribers.

The first opportunity for an actual meeting and day long tour came at the Berkeley AIS Convention in April 1969. There was little business but plenty of good slides and it ended with a Wild Iris Tour to Santa Cruz on Monterey Bay where they saw both redwood trees and wild irises. The aim of the meeting and tour (as it still is today) was toward education on species variation and identification as the basis for judging.

At the 1972 Portland AIS Convention two display gardens, filled with generous clumps from members gardens, showed the range of beardless irises that could be grown in virtually any backyard. For a preconvention tour three busloads trekked to Saddle Mountain State Park. The Necanicum Mountain was deep in iris flowers with a spectacular view of the blue Pacific. The display and tour resulted in quite a few new members.

The strong showing at the 1972 Convention helped convince the AIS board to approve SIGNA as an AIS section. At the same time the AIS Board approved the establishment of the Mitchell Award for Pacific Coast Natives. Almost simultaneously, however, those interested in PCI's were organizing their own group. By the following March the Society for Pacific Coast Native Irises had also been approved as an AIS section.

Also in the spring of 1972 the initial part of the *SIGNA Species Study Manual* containing the introductory essay, forward and key was distributed to the membership. The main body framework of loose leaf A-Z pages came the next year followed by further accruments annually until 1980. With the appearance of Brian Mathew's excellent book, *The Iris*, no further additions were necessary, as he had provided exactly what was needed.

Over the years SIGNA membership has continued to grow under the fine leadership first of Roy Davidson then Jean Witt, Elaine Hulbert, Colin Rigby and now Richard Kiyomoto. SIGNA now has a membership of over 775 in the United States and 12 foreign countries. This growth in membership has resulted in our recent incorporation which was accomplished by Colin Rigby.

Awards for species and interspecies hybrid irises within the AIS awards system became a reality in 1994. As a result SIGNA has designs and is preparing for the casting of the Founders of SIGNA

Medal for species and the Randolph-Perry Medal for interspecies hybrids. Also a species checklist is nearing completion. This checklist will contain an alphabetical listing of all species iris clones and cultivars.

SIGNA has major proposals to finance research grants and germplasm collection as major activities, for the first time putting our money where our mandates and verbiage has been. SIGNA is also supporting two species events, the International Species Symposium in March 1995 in St Louis MO and the Siberian and Species Convention in 1996 in Massachusetts. Through these things SIGNA continues towards the goals of education on species variation and identification and the preservation of all iris species.

This article was compiled from information provided by Roy Davidson, Richard Kiyomoto, Carla Lankow and Bruce Richardson.



Ben Hagar, Bob Schreiner, and George Shoop at *Schreiner's Iris Gardens*.

Historic Iris

THE HISTORIC IRIS PRESERVATION SOCIETY

by Lawrence L. Doucette & Anne Lowe

"Preserving Irises, Iris Records and Artifacts for Future Needs"

The Historic Iris Preservation Society (HIPS), was founded in 1988 by a group of dedicated irisians who understood the importance of preserving our iris heritage. HIPS is the newest Section in AIS and because of the unique objectives inaugurated by them, the society has an extremely fast growing and widespread global membership of more than 750 concerned and active irisarians. Also, due to the uniqueness of the Society, it encompasses cultivars of all the other AIS Sections.

The section maintains an up-to-date locator of over 3,000 antique irises, some of which are bordering on extinction. In addition to providing members with commercial sources, a dynamic DataBank can put you in touch with individuals who are willing to provide irises that are not commercially available. HIPS categorizes an 'antique' as an iris which was introduced over 30 years ago. Many of these older classics are being used as an element in gene pools to help capture that all elusive link or that special trait which hybridizers either overlooked or set aside at that time for other attributes. Today, many are re-evaluating their initial alternatives.

HIPS boasts experts who can help correctly name that unknown iris from grandmother's yard. To further assist you in the identification of older irises, HIPS offers reprints or reproduced copies of early iris reference material. To help you enjoy and learn about our iris history, HIPS sponsors a number of display gardens

Species & "Species X"



Copeland PXE-1
(*Pseudacorus* x *Ensata*)



I. laevigatae Albopurpurea
Colchesterensis



I. laevigatae Alba

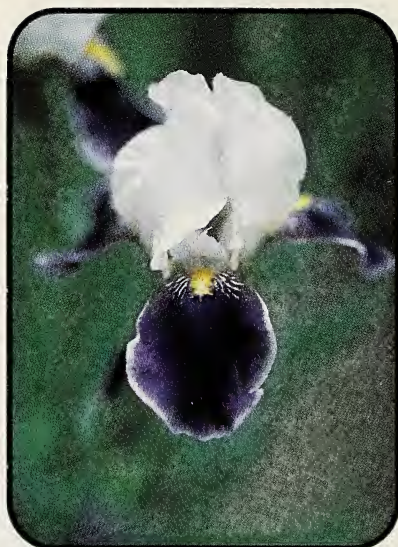


I. virginica x Tetraploid Louisiana (Durio)

Historic Irises



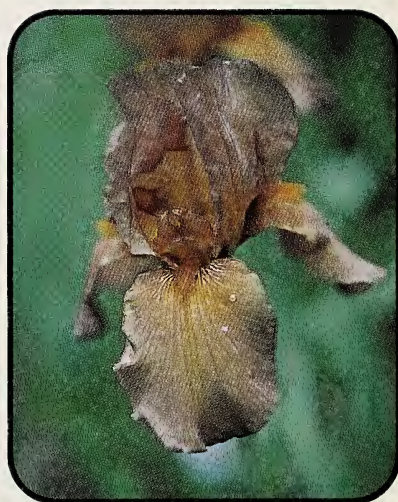
WINTER OLYMPICS
(O. Brown '61) DM'67



WABASH
(Williamson) DM'40



RAMESES
(H.P. Sass) DM'32



ARGUS PHEASANT
(DeForest '52) DM'52

in various parts of the U.S. Also, you can view many of the older irises through the HIPS slide rental program.

The Section is proud of the outstanding journal *Roots*, published twice yearly, and filled with informative articles on older irises, identification tips, and sources for historic irises, etc.

HIPS has encouraged a number of programs including the initiation of reprints of past *AIS Check Lists* and was instrumental in sponsoring the creation of a National AIS Library. HIPS has copied and made available *The Iris Chronicles* which detail the lives and introductions of many AIS hybridizers of the past. This includes the *Sass Chronicles* which has heretofore been unpublished, but can now be obtained through HIPS.

It has never been our intention to preserve every iris that has been introduced—that would be unrealistic. The primary purpose of HIPS is to locate and identify older irises and bring them together with the people who want to grow them. To that end, the Historic Iris Preservation Society will continue to attract irisarians throughout the iris world.

Far too much of our iris heritage is already beyond recovery. Each new HIPS member gives us another chance at iris preservation. Let us help to stem the tide. Don't let the old ones slip away.

Lawrence L. Doucette is the current President of HIPS, and Anne Lowe was the founding President & ROOTS Editor.



Novelty Tall Bearded, with spoons. Photo by T. Aitken

Aril Society International

YESTERDAY AND TODAY AT PLEASURE IRIS GARDENS

by Mrs. Henry Danielson

The aril species are the ancestors of the aril hybrid iris of today. Some of the species were collected in the middle east by pioneer hybridizers. It has been stated that these have grown there in the wild since 1500 B.C.

About thirty years ago I became interested in the *Oncocyclus* and *Regelia* species when I attended my first aril show in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Through the *Bulletin of the American Iris Society*, I discovered a one page ad advertising species and aril hybrids by Henry Danielson of *Mont Clare Iris Gardens*. Although he lived in Chicago at the time, his expert advice was inspiration for me and led to the founding of *Pleasure Iris Gardens* here in the desert southwest.

Henry Danielson gave the "Iris World" many beautiful iris. BIG BLACK BUMBLEBEE was his first introduction in 1966. This iris of *Regeliocyclus* breeding is a deep pink amethyst with mulberry veining. It has a brown beard with a large black signal. The Aril Society International presented it with "Outstanding Aril of the Year" in 1970. STARS OVER CHICAGO, also a regeliabred, received the C.G White award in 1978. This tan and brown iris with a blue beard and a branch. In 1976 LAWRENCE WELK, a tall bearded iris, was the first white iris introduced with a navy blue beard. GENETIC DANCER, another regeliabred of brownish-tan with deeper falls and a blue beard, won the C.G. White award in 1979. BIONIC BURST, a 1/2 arilbred gave this class a breakthrough in color. The

standards are light red and the falls are a darker red with a brownish-black beard. It grows well and is a good seed setter. SNOW OVER CHICAGO, another 1/2 arilbred, won the same award in 1984. PRO NEWS is more than 1/2 arilbred whose standards are lavender, veined darker; has buff colored falls and is edged gold. This 1989 winner usually has three open flowers and is a seedling of DEE MOUSE. DEE MOUSE, a 1/2 arilbred, is also slightly ruffled and has the biggest, furriest beard that I have ever seen on an iris. The standards are light blue and the falls are chartreuse veined reddish-brown. This 1990 award winner continues to produce large furry beards in its seedlings. Both PRO NEWS and DEE MOUSE would receive the C.G. White award, but Henry didn't live long enough to receive them.

I am working with *Oncocyclus* and the *Regelia* species because they give me different forms, different color combinations, and many colors of signals. My greatest challenge is branching and blooms. The *Oncocyclus* species have only one bloom on a stem, while the *Regelia* species have two blooms on a stalk. My first introduction, SAND AND SNOW, is an Onco hybrid. One of its seedlings gave me a few seeds from a cross of the species IRIS AFGANICA. These seedlings should give me a totally different bloom form, probably a slender form, with falls more in the parallel position—which is acceptable on a small flower. POLISHED BRASS is a big flower from two Onco hybrids and it inherited good growth habits. Working on this line of breeding, I have increased the signal to twice the size but branching is not developing as fast as I had hoped. The stem is sixteen inches tall and could easily support a branch. DONNA DOWNEY is a ten inch tall Onco hybrid. It is a white self with blue style crests. Its falls are a sky-blue over white ground with a big, bright yellow signal. FIRST SERGEANT, a twelve inch Onco hybrid, is a truly different form of Onco. One of its parents, the species *Iris Paradoxa*, has the same form. Its standards are 4/5 the size of the flower and the falls make up the remaining 1/5 of the flower. The unusual flower form and color combination make this flower one of a kind. TITANIC GEM is an eight inch tall Onco hybrid. The standards are off-white with some pink veining, and falls are off-white with brown-pink veining. It has an orange signal and a brown beard. ANGEL'S STAR has orange-yellow-brown coloring with a sheen to it. With DESERT YELLOW and IRIS AURANITICA as its

parents it grows like a true species. With a six inch globular formed seedling that is bright yellow with a huge bright orange signal and is an exciting new color.

Last but not least, I am working on a new line of tetraploids. This fall I planted tetraploid seeds from DEE MOUSE with some Sam Norris seedlings. May the late freeze pass them by.

PROGRESS IN ARIL AND ARILBRED HYBRIDIZING

by Howard Shockey

ARILS:

Twenty-five years ago, most arils in distribution were colored or marked in greyed violet and purple, or sometimes in brown-purple. Although their forms and patterns were striking, hybridizers had already begun attempts to produce plants having flowers of lighter and brighter colors, mainly through use of hybrids involving *I. urmiensis*, *lortetii*, and *auranitica*. Some forms of *I. auranitica* have red tones in their signals, where Dr. Peter Werckmeister found the only true red color pigment in any of the many iris types he studied.

This baited hybridizers to produce truly red signals, and in several years, they had some success, but the red toned signals faded to burnt orange shortly after the flower opened. Dogged persistence for over 35 years by one hybridizer has led to a number of aril hybrids having signals in different shades of red, whose colors last until the flower fades. These are not only displayed on flowers having lighter and brighter colors, but possess new and different combinations of color—important goals of aril hybridizing. Near white *oncocyli* and *oncogelias* are now appearing, which was undreamed of 25 years ago.

The primary goal of aril hybridizing is to produce more hearty plants having better tolerance to disease, weather, and cultural conditions. Only small progress has been made in these aspects, for genetic inheritance for these traits remains stubbornly unchanged. Most progress has been demonstrated by advanced generation *oncogelias* which retain some *regelia* genes for increased

cold and moisture tolerances. Being new developments, the tetraploid oncogelias have yet to demonstrate progress over diploid oncogelias having like aril contents, except in plant and flower size.

Future progress in arils will continue to be limited by slow and erratic seed germination and difficulty of culture. In today's society, it may be limited more by the number of serious hybridizers with the energy and patience required to attain results. The field is wide open for potential improvements and diversities have hardly been scratched.

ARILBREDS:

Primary hybridizing goals for arilbreds are the transfer of desirable forms, colors, and patterns of the arils to plants of easier growth, more buds, and of better tolerance to weather and cultural conditions. Most sought for traits are those of the oncocycli, for they are the most beautiful and spectacular. Greatest progress has been made in plants with one-half aril content, for they are amphidiploids and easy to intercross. Progress has been steady and very substantial in most of these aspects, and is remarkable if one considers the relative few hybridizers who have been involved.

Twenty-five years ago numerous derivatives of the C.G. White amphidiploids were being introduced. These were new and very hot items. They were later combined with descendants of other amphidiploids such as ARDRUN, CAPITOLA, and IB-MAC, to produce most of the half-breds of today. Although constant progress has been maintained through the years, most cultivars did not reflect the most prized attribute of aril patterns—sharp, large signals in a variety of different colors.

Breakthrough in this aspect began in 1971 with the introduction of WELCOME REWARD, an amphidiploid from C.G. White W-142 X PINK FORMAL. W-142 was an oncocyclus hybrid of reddish brown-purple with large near black signals. Gene(s) for the large signal expression were passed along to at least two known hybrids involving WELCOME REWARD: ONLOOKER ('84), and a seedling: (STARS OVER CHICAGO X WELCOME REWARD). Many new hybrids from Onlooker have very large, well defined signals. The largest signals and greatest variety of signal colors on today's arilbreds appear to come from several hybrids involving both

ONLOOKER and the WELCOME REWARD seedling—a double dose of genes for this trait. Signals from several F_3 and F_4 hybrids now measure $1\frac{3}{8}$ " across!

Progress is also shown in hybrids having better oncocyclis form, broad oncocyclis-like beards, and in cleaner and different color patterns. White arilbreds have recently appeared which will be decorated with various colored signals in the future. Growth characteristics have been improved, as well as disease resistance.

Aril traits are reflected strongest in arilbreds of over one half aril content ($\frac{3}{4}$ -breds). Although bud count is typically only doubled over that of the oncocyclis and oncogelias and are carried on an unbranched stem, compensation is gained through increased number of bloom stems. This is a relatively small class of arilbreds, because they are the result of hybridizing between plants of dissimilar chromosome counts. Successful crossing is rare, seed production is low, and seed germination is lower yet.

Hybrids of this type existed twenty-five years ago, but generally were poor growers, probably because they usually involved oncocyclis species directly in combination with early amphidiploids. Today's $\frac{3}{4}$ -breds are much better growers, some even equaling that of most $\frac{1}{2}$ -breds. Most probable explanation for this is that they derive from selected advanced generation aril hybrids and later amphidiploids.

What of the future? Crystal ball gazing can be analogous to hybridizing in one sense—there are unexpected occurrences which can alter the hybridizer's direction. For the immediate future, we can expect to see continued improvements in both arils and arilbreds, especially in arilbreds of one-half aril content. Progeny from very recent seedlings will appear in a variety of different colors and patterns, and most will have large, sharp signals. Within 15 years, we can reasonably expect true-red and bright purple signals on arilbreds of both one-half and over one-half aril content.

Amphidiploids descendent from tetraploid arils will make their impact by introducing genes from different oncocyclis species and from modern tall bearded irises. All in all, the field is much more open than that of the arils, for here we are dealing with interfertile plants of easy growth in most areas, and are not plagued with seed germination problems. The future promises to be one of beauty and sometimes surprising results.

Louisiana Iris

THE SOCIETY FOR LOUISIANA IRISES

by Marie Caillet

The Society for Louisiana Irises was organized in the spring of 1941 by a handful of interested iris growers and a few early collectors of the native species found in South Louisiana. One of their main objectives was to bring attention to these beautiful native flowers.

Although the real workers in the Society were few during the early years, an ambitious course was set. Annual meetings with banquet speakers, collecting trips to the swamps and elaborately staged shows were held. Over the years these meetings continued, but banquet speakers were exchanged for slide shows and plant auctions, programs on hybridizing and culture or judging schools were held, bench shows with AIS Judges were used and tours are now to area iris gardens. If members go to the swamps, it is to photograph and not to collect.

Many innovations were started, such as the arrangement with AIS for a top award for Louisiana irises. The Mary Swords DeBaillon Award was begun in 1948 with a beautiful bronze medal supplied each year by the Society. Slide sets with a complete script were loaned for programs. A slide archive was started with hundreds of slides of old historical cultivars as well as new introductions. A check list for Louisianas was printed as early as 1947, with a revised and updated list in 1982 and again in 1990. These last lists made use of old catalogs, AIS Bulletin articles and early photographs to supplement early registration descriptions.

It was essential for this small independent and spread out group to write and publish. Contact with the members began with news

sheets or single articles sent at irregular intervals. This eventually evolved into a quarterly newsletter about 1955. A special bulletin was begun in 1951 and colored pictures added to these in 1966. The 1995 Special Publication is now available containing 13 articles and many pages of colored photographs. The Society has published two bibliographies listing existing articles on Louisiana irises up to 1972. There is now a need to bring this up to date.

Instead of a Special Publication in 1988, a full scale hard back book was published. *The Louisiana Iris* sold out in 4 years and a second printing has been done. Book sales paid for the 1991 and 1995 Special Publications and for printing 30,000 four page color brochures that are given out free. The book has given the Society wide spread publicity and the brochures are reaching thousands of prospective Louisiana growers.

The Society supports research on these irises and works with AIS in teaching judging schools. Members are active in giving programs and opening their gardens for tours. Donations of rhizomes have been made to many national and foreign botanical or public gardens.

A milestone was reached in 1993 when the Society for Louisiana Irises became a Cooperating Society of the American Iris Society. Although always cooperating, they are now officially recognized as a part of AIS with a scheduled program at the National Convention. Membership is about 500 and includes growers from most of the states and many foreign countries. Many bearded iris dealers now handle Louisianas and the number and location of hybridizers spread yearly. Louisiana irises now form a section in most iris shows and often win top awards. In Australia, Louisiana irises have won the majority of Australian Dykes Medals since the award was established there.

The Society for Louisiana Irises has been in operation for more than 50 years. Those once termed "Southern States Irises" have finally taken their rightful place in the "World of Irises". And the organizers of this once little known group could be proud of what they started and what has been accomplished.

Marie Caillet, who now lives in Texas, was a member of the original 1941 working group and has been active throughout the history of the organization. She is co-editor of The Louisiana Iris and edited the Newsletters for 14 years. She was voted the AIS Distinguished Service Medal in 1983.

LOUISIANAS TODAY

by Perry Dyer

The Louisiana iris today has become one of the most popular classes of irises. The number of growers has increased dramatically over the past decade, as we continue to test the range in which they can be adapted. In addition to the moist temperate climates, such as Florida, where the bearded iris is virtually impossible to sustain, we now have irisarians as far north as the central plains of Alberta, Canada successfully growing and blooming them. And with water gardens becoming a hobby *en vogue*, the Louisiana is "natural"!

It is amazing that such rapid advancement has occurred in the evolution of the species, at the diploid level, after a mere 40 years of hybridization. When you consider that all these new colors and patterns have emerged from the efforts of scarcely more than a handful of "serious" hybridizers, the results are no less than phenomenal.

Much of the advancement can be attributed to one main hybridizer, the late Charles Arny, Jr., a professor who taught at the University of Southwest Louisiana in Lafayette, Louisiana. His tenacious search for excellence as he explored virtually every avenue of Louisianas left not only a legacy of fine, award-winning cultivars, but also a firm foundation of genetic material to further develop by the next generation of hybridizers. On a smaller scale, but certainly with as much importance, other hybridizers, principally in Louisiana, Arkansas, and California, concurrently were building their own bloodlines from different approaches. Now that we have more hybridizers working with them today, combining the best traits from the various baselines, wonderful and exciting new colors and patterns are appearing, literally with each new generation of bloom.

In my opinion, most of the rapid success in diploid Louisiana breeding can be linked to two events. First was the discovery of the species, *I. nelsonii*, known in the early days as "Abbeville reds" or "super-fulvas". The use of this special strain, found only in one small pocket of nature just outside the Acadiana village of Abbeville, Louisiana, opened up many colors previously unknown in Louisianas. Secondly, the release by Mr. Arny in 1978 of his beautiful,

ruffled cream-white, CLARA GOULA, would revolutionize the form of the modern Louisiana iris. Its parent, CHARLIE'S MICHELE, was the first Louisiana to exhibit a notable degree of ruffling in its floral parts. CLARA GOULA has made such a significant impact in the breeding of Louisianas that I refer to it as "the Snow Flurry of Louisianas". It has transmitted its outstanding form and heavy ruffling to offspring in all color ranges, and we have yet to fully explore all the possibilities. Examples of contemporary varieties directly linked to CLARA GOULA are the clear cornflower blue, SINFONIETTA (Raabe); the delicate light yellow, VERMILION QUEEN (Goula); the pure white OBVIOUS HEIR (Taylor) with waxy substance and tight ruffling not unlike that of a true orchid; the intoxicating new pink, DANCING VOGUE (Taylor); the stately pure sunshine yellow, CLASSICAL NOTE (Taylor); and the flamboyant, deeply channel-ruffled orchid bitone, MARGARET LEE (Taylor).

Another important pattern, directly linked to the CHARLIE'S MICHELE/CLARA GOULA bloodline, is just now emerging, and is causing quite a stir among hybridizers and Louisiana enthusiasts in general. With the release of CHARJOY'S MIKE by Mr. Army in 1977, we had our first halo pattern, in this case a silver halo outlining a violet-purple base color. Succeeding generations have now unmasked a golden halo also, as is found in varieties such as FESTIVAL'S ACADIAN (Haymon), FRINGED GOLD (Shepard), and CAJUN SUNRISE (Mertzweiler). The popular CLARA GOULA child, EXQUISITE LADY (Owen), is a hazy blue with a more delicate silvery halo. Many of the John Taylor releases from Australia exhibit the halo pattern, with the most dramatic offering being the seedling scheduled for 1996 release, DARK LOVER, a deep velvet pile in violet completely encircled with a stunning 1/4" halo in silver.

Louisianas are unrivaled in brilliance and clarity of color in the blues and the reds, from the intense deep blue of SEA LORD (Taylor) to the bright cherry red of F.A.C. McCULLA (Army). The only major color currently missing in the population is that of orange, and we expect to see this color surface as we further mix the different bloodlines. The range available today is truly remarkable, from the sophisticated black taffeta of EMPRESS JOSEPHINE (Haymon); to the macho richness of the heavily ruffled brown, GLADIATOR'S GIFT (Taylor); to the sheer beauty of the orchid-

lavender, KAY NELSON (Granger); to the bold and brazen C'EST SI BON (Taylor), with its predominant starburst signal pattern in white outpouring over nearly the entire ground of its purple velvet falls—perhaps even a precursor to a Louisiana plicata? New color combinations are emerging, such as the bright variegata combination in LUCY PAYENS (Taylor) and the soft muted medley of pastels in lavender, pink, and cream, as found in the voluptuous DEIRDRE KAY (Granger).

All of this has been achieved at the diploid level. As further discussed by co-author, Joe Mertzweiller, we have just scratched the surface of exploring the world of tetraploidy in Louisianas. Yet without the pioneering work this scientist has done, we wouldn't even be as far along as we are today. Even with an admittedly limited amount of materiel from colchicine treatment to work with, we now have tetraploids in red, violet, yellow, blue, soft lavender, some bicolors, and now even a white. Once some of the newer patterned diploids, such as the haloed CAJUN SUNRISE, are converted, the possibilities are endless for new color combinations and patterns. Fortunately we have a few more serious hybridizers now who are now also working on tetraploid conversion, so you can expect to see major development at the tetraploid level in the near future.

In my dealing with Louisiana irises—and with Louisiana growers—the one thing above all that has impressed me about this group is diversity. Through all the changes, those of us who care so much for this native flower have demanded that we remember “from whence we have come”. Even with all the fancy ruffles and wide form and large impressive flowers, we still accept the diverse shapes and sizes originally found in the wild. The old Debaillon winner, BLACK WIDOW (MacMillan '53), well-named with its narrow spidery black petals, remains one of the most popular cultivars on the market. Signal patterns are just as diverse, from the virtually non-existent line signal in FULL ECLIPSE (Hager), to the contrasting, imposing bright yellow steeple signals against red velvet, as found in the great classic, ANN CHOWNING (Chowning). In some varieties, such as JAZZ BALLET (Taylor) and GEISHA EYES (Arny), the signal pattern appears on all six parts, often creating a “star” effect.

And we're not just looking for “another pretty face”. Today's hybridizers are working to extend the bloom season by increasing

the number of bud positions and number of buds per socket. Some varieties such as RED ECHO (Rowlan), KITTY D (Haymon), and LINA (Taylor) have been known to rebloom, at least in the temperate climates. We are attempting to make the plant habits more compact through selective breeding. And we are carefully breeding for those varieties that will do well in all parts of the country, especially in colder regions.

To see just where we have come in such a short period of time, with so few active "players", is indeed humbling. To dream of what beauty the future has in store is exciting.

Perry Dyer, Blanchard, OK, is a Master Judge with the American Iris Society and current President of the Society for Louisiana Irises (SLI).

MILESTONES IN DEVELOPMENT OF LOUISIANA IRISES

by Joseph K. Mertzweiller

Louisiana irises (series *Hexagonae*) is one of the main classifications of beardless irises native to North America. Specifically, these irises are native to the swamps and bogs of southeastern states. They were very prolific a century ago, but changing environmental conditions have greatly reduced their numbers. Today, some species border on endangerment. Since Louisianas are "wetland irises", they perform superbly in moist areas off limits to bearded and many other iris types. This is considered a definite asset since it extends iris habitat. Water gardens offer outstanding opportunities for using Louisianas in the landscape. Wetland conditions, however, are not essential and these irises are highly adaptable to normal garden culture. They grow and bloom well in all parts of the United States and many foreign countries. Louisianas are "world class" irises.

Very little is known about their ancient origin and modern horticultural history is limited mainly to this century. Dykes was first to hybridize the species. Dr. J. K. Small was a plant scientist, explorer and collector who publicized Louisiana irises in his writings in the 1925 - 1930 era. His work led to formation of the Society for

Louisiana Irises, the organization which was to lead the way into the future.

Impact of Collected Natureal Hybrids

Growing collected Louisiana irises remained *en vogue* until about 1950. Then controlled hybridizing began to replace collecting and the race was on. Early hybridizing developments were based almost entirely on irises collected in the wild in the 1930 – 1950 period. Probably with no other type of iris did natural hybrids play as important a role as with the Louisianas.

Outstanding parents in early hybridizing were a group of irises known as “Abbeville Irises” or “Super Fulvas” found by Mr. W. B. MacMillan of Abbeville, Louisiana in 1938. Obviously they were closely related to the species *I. fulva*, but were larger and more vigorous growers with a broader color range. Mr. MacMillan reasoned correctly that the Abbeville irises offered outstanding hybridizing possibilities. During the next several decades they revolutionized hybridizing, contributed a major part of the Louisiana gene pool and are in the parentage of almost every modern hybrid. Until 1966 the Abbeville irises were a scientific enigma. Dr. L. F. Randolph and Professor Ira S. Nelson determined they were diploids of hybrid origin and involved the three species, *I. fulva*, *I. giganteaerulea* and *I. brevicaulis*. Randolph considered them a species which was formed and evolved by natural hybridization and named them *I. nelsonii* in honor of Professor Nelson. Thus nature provided the initial impetus in development of Louisiana irises.

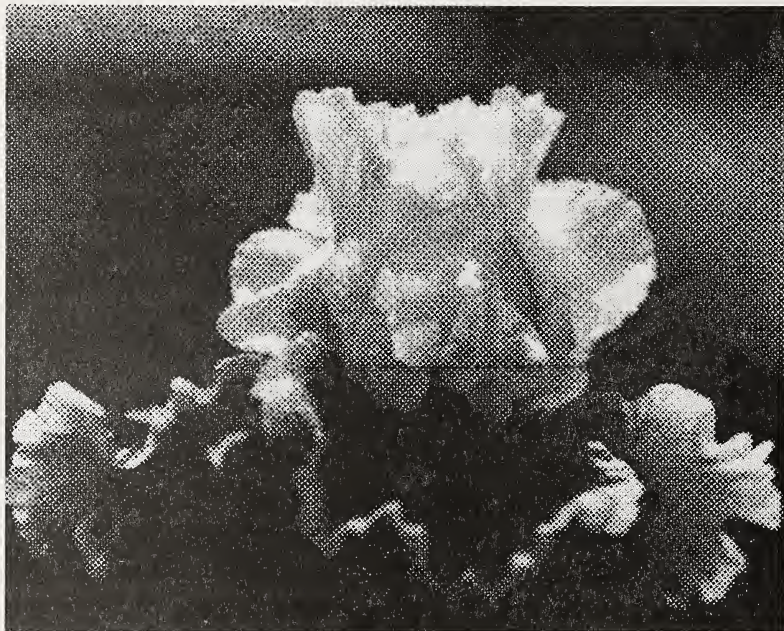
Development of Tetraploids

Although hybridizing with diploid Louisiana irises still offers wonderful opportunities, the future probably lies with the tetraploids. No tetraploid Louisianas were found in the wild. The manner in which tetraploids revolutionized breeding of bearded irises was not an immediate possibility and loomed as a serious barrier. In the 1930s the plant-derived chemical Colchicine was discovered to have the unusual property of doubling chromosomes or converting diploids to tetraploids. This writer undertook a program along this line in the 1960s. This proved to be a slow and tedious effort and it wasn't until 1972 that the first Louisiana tetraploids were registered. Details of this program are reported elsewhere. Although tetraploid Louisianas have many outstanding

features, hybridizing has progressed slowly. Only about 30 tetraploid cultivars are included in the current Louisiana check list. Reduced fertility is the main problem. Another problem: There is a very limited number of hybridizers, and very few work with tetraploids. Only by increasing this effort can the true potential be realized.

Challenges for the Future

As with other iris types, the availability of tetraploids greatly enhances possibilities and challenges in hybridizing. Mr. Ken Durio has recently reported a hybrid between *I. virginica* (diploid of the series *Laevigatae*) and a tetraploid Louisiana. No hybrids of this type were known. This is a very beautiful iris, with features of both parents identifiable, and is therefore considered a true hybrid. It combines two different series of beardless irises as well as two ploidy levels. It could be the first of entirely new types of beardless irises. This is a very new and recent development and the overall impact remains to be determined.



THE SPIRIT OF RINGO (Shoop '79) TB, AM'83. Photo by Greg Schifferli, NY.
In memory of George Shoop,

- Terry Aitken

Arils

"The Desert Iris"



ONCOCYCLUS HYBRID



OYEZ
(Milliken '38)



TINY TYKE AT 4"
(L. 'Jonney' Rich '74)
HM'75



ONCOGELIABRED
1/2 ARIL (B)



ONCOGELIABRED
1/2 ARIL (A)

Louisiana Irises

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AUSTRALIAN
HYBRID



CAJUN SUNRISE



PROFESSOR IKE
(Mertzweiller '73)
First tetraploid
introduced.